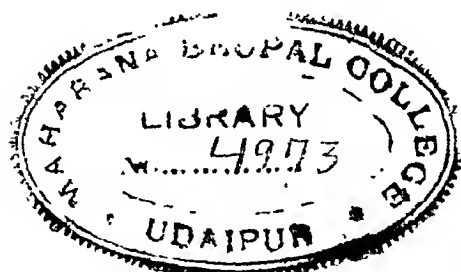


UP TO THE HILLS

UP TO THE HILLS

DEVOTIONAL MEDITATIONS
AND POEMS

EDITED BY
CAREY BONNER



HODDER AND STOUGHTON
LIMITED LONDON

1924

If thou art worn and hard beset
With sorrows thou would'st fain forget,
If thou would'st learn a lesson that will keep
Thy heart from fainting and thy soul from sleep,
Go to the hills.

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW.

TO THE

REV. JOSEPH JOHNSON,

SALE, NEAR MANCHESTER

MY DEAR JOHNSON,

To you, as my oldest friend, this book is affectionately dedicated.

We have often climbed the heights together, and, surely, on those heights there came to you that song here given as a fitting key-note of the volume.

C. B.

A MELODY OF LOVE

The voice of the Lord.—Ps. xxix. 3

God speaks to us in bird and song ;
In winds that drift the clouds along ;
Above the din of toil and wrong,—
A melody of love.

God speaks to us in far and near ;
In peace of home and friends most dear ;
From the dim past, and present clear,
A melody of love.

God speaks to us in darkest night ;
By quiet ways through mornings bright,
When shadows fall with evening light,
A melody of love.

God speaks to us in every land,
On wave-lapp'd shore and silent strand ;
By kiss of child, and touch of hand,
A melody of love.

O voice Divine, speak Thou to me !
Beyond the earth, beyond the sea ;
First let me hear, then sing to Thee
A melody of love.

JOSEPH JOHNSON.

FOREWORD

THIS book has been compiled for use in the "Quiet Hour" at daydawn or eventide. Its aim is to lift the soul near to God.

The passages are undated, to enable the reader to make his own choice of subject. Each weekly section is so planned that, in the readings for the seven days, there may be a unity of theme from day to day; the Scripture, Meditation, and Poem being centred on one phase of the general topic for the week.

"Up to the Hills," whilst taken as the special title for the introductory sections, is also meant to be the common title of the whole book.

To ponder such truths as the Heavenly Father's might and mercy, Jesus Christ as Friend of man, Revealer of God, Saviour and living Lord, Prayer and Praise, and the making of life a "walk with God," cannot fail to lift man into fellowship with the Eternal, so inspiring him to noble, Christlike living.

The book is sent forth in the prayerful hope that it may aid many servants of God to become spiritual Highlanders.

C. B.

73, WOODLAND RISE,
MUSWELL HILL,
LONDON, N.10.
October, 1924.

CONTENTS

I. UP TO THE HILLS. PART ONE

MEDITATION	POEM	PAGE*
1. Introductory	To the Hills	18
2. "I will lift up mine eyes".	"Lord, open Thou"	20
3. The Nearness of the Hills	Alone with Thee	22
4. The Nearness of the Hills	Life's Common Way	24
5. The Kinship of Life	How Beautiful to be Alive!	26
6. The Kinship of Life	Under a Wiltshire Apple-tree	28
7. The Kinship of Life	The Tide of Life	30
8.	The Procession	32

II. UP TO THE HILLS. PART TWO

1. The Companions	The Child and the Song	34
2. The Companions	The Saints of God	36
3. The Springs	The Fountains of Life	38
4. The Springs	Hidden Springs	40
5. The Place of Outlook	We thank Thee	42
6. The Place of Outlook	"Thine is the Kingdom"	44
7. The Place of the Silences	Silent Hours	46
8.	The Singer	48

III. UP TO THE HILLS. PART THREE

1. The Place of the Silences	Worship	50
2. The Mount of Vision	Christ for me and in me	52
3. The Mount of Vision	Bond-servant of Jesus Christ.	54
4. Vision and Service	A Hymn of Service	56
5. Vision and Service	Hymn of the Upward Way	58
6. "But the Servants knew"	Thorough Service	60
7. Duty and Ministry	My Life	62
8.	Hymn of the City.	64

* With the exception of the last item in each Section, the page number refers to the Meditation. For Poems see Index of First Lines.

IV. "I AM THY GOD"

MEDITATION	POEM	PAGE
1. "Your Father knoweth"	Say "Father"	66
2. All-powerful and All-pitiful	God is Love	68
3. "The King of Love my Shepherd is"	The Shepherd-Lord	70
4. God Passing By	"Show me Thy Glory"	72
5. Reminders of God's Presence	The Secret Place	74
6. "Thy Presence"	The Presence	76
7. The Indwelling God	A Basque Peasant	78
8.	A Present God	80

V. JESUS CHRIST: FRIEND OF MAN

1. The Nazareth Years	The Carpenter of Nazareth	82
2. The Nazarene	"Is not this the Carpenter's Son?"	84
3. Hallowed Toil	Hymn of Labour	86
4. "Even the Wind and the Sea obey Him"	My Pilot	88
5. The Word of Words	The Master's Voice	90
6. "Come unto Me"	No Words like these Words	92
7. "Peace be unto you"	Hush	94
8.	The Prince of Life	96

VI. JESUS CHRIST: REVEALER OF GOD

1. "For the Sake of the Name"	"In Christ Jesus"	98
2. Christ's Life reveals God's Love	Image of the Invisible	100
3. "God so loved"	"O Love, I give myself"	102
4. "I have given you an Example"	Revelation by Working	104
5. On the Hills with Christ	The Holy Hill	106
6. "Evermore give us this Bread"	Divine Meat and Drink	108
7. "To me to live is Christ"	God's Dwelling-place	110
8.	God with Us	112

VII. JESUS CHRIST: SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD

MEDITATION	POEM	PAGE
1. Christ Crucified	The Mediator	114
2. The Message of the Cross	Hail, Blessed Cross I	116
3. Christ fulfilling the Law	Jesus, the Soul's Refuge	118
4. The Sin-Bearer	Christ's Thrall	120
5. The Power of the Cross	"Juxta Crucem Magdalena"	122
6. "That Holy Cross"	Rise, O my Soul	124
7. The Eternal Saviour	Hymn to our Saviour	126
8.	No East or West	128

VIII. JESUS CHRIST: RISEN AND LIVING

1. "He rose again"	"The Power of His Resurrection"	130
2. The Unseen Companion	"Oh, leave us not"	132
3. "Lovest thou Me?"	The Question	134
4. Christ, the Fullness of Life	Approaches	136
5. "Christ is All, and in All"	Jesus, our Forerunner	138
6. "Children, have ye any Meat?"	Fishermen—Not of Galilee	140
7. "It is the Lord"	By the Lake of Tiberias	142
8.	Love and Life	144

IX. WHILE I LIVE, I PRAY

1. What is Prayer?	"Thou maintainest my Lot"	146
2. "Pray without ceasing"	Live in Prayer	148
3. "Unto Thee do I lift up my Soul"	Prayer	150
4. Converse with God	"The Lord is the Portion"	152
5. Prayer and Power	The Prayer	154
6. The "Power-room"	Strength in Prayer	156
7. When Work becomes Prayer	Benediction	158
8.	"I give myself to Prayer"	160

X. "I WILL PRAISE THEE"

MEDITATION	POEM	PAGE
1. "Be ye thankful"	The Grace of Joy	162
2. The Joyful Servant	Hymn of Joy	164
3. Joy springing from Love	"In Thy Presence is Fullness of Joy"	166
4. Thanksgiving	A Thanksgiving	168
5. A Call to Praise	My Hymn of Thankfulness	170
6. Constant Mercy—Constant Praise	Alleluia	172
7. The Life of Praise	The Melody in the Heart	174
8.	A Song of Praise	176

XI. LIFE: DAY BY DAY

1. Nourishment of the Soul	Day by Day	178
2. The First Thought	Come to me, Lord	180
3. Daily Manna	Sustenance by the Hour	182
4. Sunrise Days	Unusual Days	184
5. Our Days	Exalted and Ordinary Days	186
6. Days of Waiting	Thy Days go on	188
7. "Do All in the Name"	Weekday	190
8.	Days of God	192

XII. THE LIFE OF TRUST

1. "Jesus called a Little Child"	The Child in the Midst	194
2. "As a Lily"	The Lily	196
3. Love and Life	Lover of Souls	198
4. The Heavenly Gardener	Come, Bud of Joy	200
5. Peace by Power	For Serenity of Soul	202
6. "Fear Not!"	"I will fear no Evil"	204
7. "The Desert shall blossom"	Transformation	206
8.	Childlike Trust	208

XIII. WALKING WITH GOD

MEDITATION	POEM	PAGE
1. "Even the Forgiveness of Sins" . . .	"There is Forgiveness" . . .	210
2. The Prepared Heart . . .	The Offering . . .	212
3. "The Spirit helpeth" . . .	Praying in the Holy Ghost . . .	214
4. Walking in Love . . .	Live in the Love of God . . .	216
5. Personal Influence . . .	"This Year also" . . .	218
6. Perennial Youth . . .	Renewal . . .	220
7. The Eternal Home . . .	The Life Beyond . . .	222
8.	The Long, Last Mile . . .	224

INDEX OF POEMS

FIRST LINES	PAGE
All grey the dawn, and dim the morning light . . .	<i>Carry Bonner</i> . . . 143
Amid the hills retired . . .	<i>Thomas T. Lynch</i> . . . 39
And art Thou come with us to dwell . . .	<i>Dora Greenwell</i> . . . 112
Angels to me no message bring . . .	<i>Frederick Langbridge</i> . . . 193
A quiet heart, submissive, meek . . .	<i>George MacDonald</i> . . . 41
As helpless as a child who clings . . .	<i>J. D. Burns</i> . . . 208
Be mute who will, who can . . .	<i>William Wordsworth</i> . . . 161
But God is never so far off . . .	<i>F. W. Faber</i> . . . 209
Carry me over the long last mile . . .	<i>L. Maclean Watt</i> . . . 224
Christ, Who art above the sky . . .	<i>Francis Turner Palgrave</i> . . . 127
Climbing Dawn upon the mountains . . .	<i>Amy Wilson Carmichael</i> . . . 32
Come, bud of joy, the driving rain . . .	<i>Amy Wilson Carmichael</i> . . . 201
Come to me, Lord, when first I wake . . .	<i>H. V. Tebbs</i> . . . 181
Consider it—this outer world . . .	<i>Jean Ingelow</i> . . . 163
Deeper than voice of the falling of waters . . .	<i>W. G. Tarrant</i> . . . 45
Deep strike Thy roots, O heavenly Vine . . .	<i>John G. Whittier</i> . . . 97
Each morning breaks in glory . . .	<i>Carry Bonner</i> . . . 71
Earth's treasures waste with use . . .	<i>Francis Turner Palgrave</i> . . . 49
Eternal Mover, whose diffused glory . . .	<i>Sir Henry Wotton</i> . . . 73
Father of Spirits! Thine all secrets be . . .	<i>Owen Meredith</i> . . . 159
For me, I have my own church equally . . .	<i>Robert Browning</i> . . . 69
For sun, and also shadow-time . . .	<i>Edward Augustus Rand</i> . . . 43
For the loveliness of dawn . . .	<i>Amy Wilson Carmichael</i> . . . 173
From doubt and all its sullen pain . . .	<i>M. Woolsey Stryker</i> . . . 101
Give Him brain and breast . . .	<i>Thomas T. Lynch</i> . . . 61
Give us our bread to-day . . .	<i>George Matheson</i> . . . 182
Give us this day our daily bread . . .	<i>Lucy F. Massey</i> . . . 179
God made the shore . . .	<i>Amy Wilson Carmichael</i> . . . 35
God of the granite and the rose . . .	<i>L. Dolen</i> . . . 31
God speaks to us . . .	<i>Joseph Johnson</i> . . . 5
Grant us to keep at least . . .	<i>R. C. Trench</i> . . . 145
Hail, blessed Cross! how bold . . .	<i>Dora Greenwell</i> . . . 117
Hail, scenes of holy grandeur . . .	<i>H. F. Lyte</i> . . . 17
Heart-broken and weary, where'er thou may'st be . . .	<i>Edwin Paxton Hood</i> . . . 93
Heaven above is softer blue . . .	<i>G. Wade Robinson</i> . . . 49
He hides within the lily . . .	<i>W. C. Gannett</i> . . . 197
He sang of the peace that lies on the sea . . .	<i>Fredk. A. Jackson</i> . . . 48

INDEX OF POEMS

	PAGE
How beautiful it is to be alive . . .	Henry S. Sutton . . . 27
How high Thou art! our songs can own	Elizabeth Barrett Browning 115
How sweet to me is life . . .	Thomas T. Lynch . . . 221
I bind my heart this tide . . .	L. Maclean Watt . . . 121
I bring my hymn of thankfulness . . .	Rose Terry Cooke . . . 171
I give myself to prayer . . .	Thomas T. Lynch . . . 160
I have a Pilot, and He sails . . .	Edward Augustus Rand . . . 89
I know a little, land-locked bay . . .	Edward Augustus Rand . . . 145
I look to Thee in every need . . .	S. Longfellow . . . 207
I sing because I love thee, Lord . . .	W. G. Tarrant . . . 161
I sit within my room, and joy to find .	Jones Very . . . 77
If in my heart's most secret shrine . .	Dorothy Frances Gurney 129
In Christ I feel the heart of God . . .	Lucy Larcom . . . 99
In Christ there is no East or West . .	John Oxenham . . . 128
In Nazareth, the narrow road . . .	George Blair . . . 82
In pastures green? Not always . . .	Henry H. Barry . . . 205
In the cross of Christ excess in men .	Bourdalone . . . 113
In the hour of death . . .	R. D. Blackmore . . . 223
In this year of our good Lord, by His	Walter J. Mathams . . . 219
Jesus my Redeemer lives . . .	Louisa Henrietta, Electress of Branden- burg . . . 131
Jesus, Thou divine Companion . . .	Henry Van Dyke . . . 87
Joyful, joyful, we adore Thee . . .	Henry Van Dyke . . . 165
Let none but priests or lowly men	F. W. Faber . . . 33
Like shining stars they passed away .	A. Mary R. Dobson . . . 36
Live in the love of God . . .	Walter J. Mathams . . . 217
Lord Christ, let me but hold Thy hand	John Oxenham . . . 129
Lord, did'st Thou turn Thine eyes . .	Dora Greenwell . . . 135
Lord, I on every day . . .	Thomas T. Lynch . . . 191
Lord, I stand amid the night . . .	George Matheson . . . 104
Lord, I would ask this gift Divine . .	Walter J. Mathams . . . 202
Lord, in this dust Thy sovereign voice	John Henry Newman . . . 169
Lord Jesus, in the days of old . . .	J. Ashcroft Noble . . . 132
Lord, let me pray, I know not how . .	George Rawson . . . 215
Lord of the Upward Way . . .	Walter J. Mathams . . . 59
Lord, what a change within us . . .	R. C. Trench . . . 157
Lord, when in silent hours I muse . .	Thomas T. Lynch . . . 47
Lord, who art merciful . . .	Robert Southey . . . 145
Lover of souls, Thee have I heard . .	Amy Wilson Carmichael 199
Make me a captive, Lord . . .	George Matheson . . . 55
No need of guide and torch . . .	Frederick Langbridge . . . 81
Not in the silence only . . .	Horatius Bonar . . . 23
Not in the solitude alone . . .	W. C. Bryant . . . 64
Oh! how much lightlier can the spirit	Dorothy Frances Gurney 177
Oh, Jesus Christ, grow Thou in me . .	Johann Caspar Lavater . . . 53
Oh, soul! if thou would'st climb the holy hill . . .	Dorothy Frances Gurney 107
Oh, the little birds sang east . . .	Elizabeth Barrett Browning 193
O Christ upon the Tree . . .	Edwin Hatch . . . 123
O God, what sacrifice can I . . .	Stoppford A. Brooke . . . 213
O holy God, I ask this boon of Thee .	Carey Bonner . . . 51
O little lark, you need not fly . . .	Anna Bunston . . . 79
O Lord, how happy is the time . . .	From the German of Dessler . . . 118

INDEX OF POEMS

	PAGE
O love of God that broodest deep . . .	<i>Fredk. A. Jackson</i> . . . 95
O Love, who formedst me to wear . . .	<i>Johannes Scheffler</i> . . . 103
O my Saviour, make me see . . .	<i>R. Crashaw</i> . . . 113
O Power, more near my life . . .	<i>James Russell Lowell</i> . . . 21
O Prince of Life, Thy Life hath tuned . . .	<i>John Oxenham</i> . . . 96
O Son of Man, who art divine . . .	<i>C. Silvester Horne</i> . . . 85
O Thou, who by the meat and drink . . .	<i>Thomas T. Lynch</i> . . . 108
Once in my strength I came to God . . .	<i>L. Maclean Watt</i> . . . 195
Prayer is the world-plant's blossom . . .	<i>Henry S. Sutton</i> . . . 149
Prayer the Church's banquet, Angel's age . . .	<i>George Herbert</i> . . . 151
Prayer was not meant for luxury . . .	<i>F. W. Faber</i> . . . 145
Rise, O my soul, with thy desires to Heaven . . .	<i>Sir Walter Raleigh</i> . . . 125
Slowly he yielded his breath . . .	<i>Edwin Hatch</i> . . . 62
Smile, O my God, on me . . .	<i>Ray Palmer</i> . . . 80
Some folk as can afford . . .	<i>Anna Bunston</i> . . . 28
Source of my life's refreshing springs . . .	<i>Anna L. Waring</i> . . . 147
Stay, if you choose . . .	<i>L. Maclean Watt</i> . . . 65
Submit yourself to God . . .	<i>Bishop Ken</i> . . . 209
Take from my head the thorn-wreath brown . . .	<i>Elizabeth Barrett Browning</i> 169
The days that were, the days that are . . .	<i>Howell Elvet Lewis</i> . . . 192
The light of God is falling . . .	<i>Louis F. Benson</i> . . . 25
The Lord is in His Holy Place . . .	<i>W. C. Gannett</i> . . . 75
The soul wherein God dwells . . .	<i>Johannes Scheffler</i> . . . 111
The waters of strife cannot quench Thee, O Love . . .	<i>A. Mary R. Dobson</i> . . . 144
There come unusual days . . .	<i>Lord Kinloch</i> . . . 185
There is no distance in the land of spirit . . .	<i>Dorothy Frances Gurney</i> . . . 49
There's not a hope with comfort fraught . . .	<i>Emily Tayler</i> . . . 139
They have toiled all the night . . .	<i>Dinah M. Muloch</i> . . . 141
Thou art the Everlasting Word . . .	<i>Josiah Conder</i> . . . 97
Thou hast given me a heart to desire . . .	<i>Dora Greenwell</i> . . . 167
Thou Law without, Thou life within . . .	<i>W. G. Tarrant</i> . . . 67
Thou lovest still the poor; oh, blest . . .	<i>Dora Greenwell</i> . . . 81
Thou wast, O God, and Thou wast blest . . .	<i>John Mason</i> . . . 176
Thou who wast in all behaviour . . .	<i>Thomas T. Lynch</i> . . . 113
Though some good things of lower worth . . .	<i>Anna L. Waring</i> . . . 152
Through all depths of sin and loss . . .	<i>John G. Whittier</i> . . . 113
Through every minute of this day . . .	<i>John Oxenham</i> . . . 177
Through God alone can man be strong . . .	<i>Thomas T. Lynch</i> . . . 129
Thy home is with the humble, Lord . . .	<i>F. W. Faber</i> . . . 209
To one calls Christ, "Quit boat" . . .	<i>Frederick Langbridge</i> . . . 177
To the hills I lift mine eyes . . .	<i>Charles Wesley</i> . . . 19
We are drawn by cords . . .	<i>F. W. Faber</i> . . . 49
We are not driftwood on the wave . . .	<i>Thomas T. Lynch</i> . . . 193
We have no tears Thou wilt not dry . . .	<i>H. M. Kimball</i> . . . 81
What room is there for troubled fear? . . .	<i>Amy Wilson Carmichael</i> . . . 175
When days are dark and nights are cold . . .	<i>Henry Van Dyke</i> . . . 90
When in Thy light our sins we lay . . .	<i>W. G. Tarrant</i> . . . 211
When thou turn'st away from ill . . .	<i>George MacDonald</i> . . . 137
Where cross the crowded ways of life . . .	<i>Frank Mason North</i> . . . 57
Why doth one day excel another . . .	<i>Amy Wilson Carmichael</i> . . . 187
Wilt Thou not visit me? . . .	<i>Jones Very</i> . . . 155

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UP TO THE HILLS

PART ONE

The Hills

Hail, scenes of holy grandeur ! hail !
Where mortal sense stands hush'd and
awed :—

Oh, who can gaze on such, and fail
To think of Thee, my God ?

Alone and dread, Thou dwellest here,
The Source and Soul of all I see,
I look around in joy and fear,
And feel I am with Thee !

I see Thee on the mountain sit,
At summer's noon, sublime and still ;
Or, in the giant shadows flit
Along from hill to hill.

I read Thy presence and Thy power
In each eternal rock I meet ;
I trace Thy love in every flower
That blossoms at my feet.

The mountain-mists in all their moods,
The snows by earthly feet untrod,—
The fells, the forests, and the floods,
Are all instinct with God.

H. F. LYTE.

Up to the Hills

SCRIPTURE READING: Psalm cxxi. 1 to 8

The title was found in a friend's letter, dated from a great city of India, where the writer was in business.

"We are about to leave the rush of life for its hush. *We are going up to the Hills.* You, the people of a Western clime, cannot realise all the meaning of that phrase to us old Indians.

"It were hardly possible for any of us to go bravely through the tasks of this work-a-day world if one did not, amid those tasks, always keep fresh before one the memory and vision of the Hills."

Read once more that last sentence. The words soon lift themselves beyond the geography of India. It is life that measures their meaning. Pondering them, one hears them chanted again and again in varied significance. They become a Motif or Refrain in man's Song of Duty and Service.

The man poorest and most to be pitied is he who has no hills in his landscape. There is a Beatitude I am ambitious more and more to know: Blessed is that son of man who liveth nigh to a mountain of God.

The mountain shall become part of his very being. Are its peaks to him, as to Coleridge, "dread Ambassadors from earth to heaven"? So shall his thought, and will, and love reach up to the throne of the Great Creator. Is iron hidden in the heart of the Rock? It shall enter into his blood. Like that mountain, his deep foundations shall make him firm and immovable. His ascents to its heights shall give him clear vision, stalwart faith, undying hope, because they shall bring him into direct and abiding fellowship with the Most High.

Is there anything, therefore, more needful to us all than the cry, "*I will lift up mine eyes to the hills from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth*"?

To the Hills I lift mine Eyes

To the hills I lift mine eyes,
The everlasting hills ;
Streaming thence in fresh supplies,
My soul the Spirit feels.
Will He not His help afford ?
Help, while yet I ask, is given :
God comes down, the God and Lord
That made both earth and heaven.

Faithful soul, pray always ; pray,
And still in God confide ;
He thy feeble steps shall stay,
Nor suffer thee to slide :
Lean on thy Redeemer's breast ;
He thy quiet spirit keeps ;
Rest in Him, securely rest ;
Thy Watchman never sleeps.

Neither sin, nor earth, nor hell
Thy Keeper can surprise ;
Careless slumbers cannot steal
On His all-seeing eyes ;
He is Israel's sure defence ;
Israel all His care shall prove,
Kept by watchful providence,
And ever-waking love.

See the Lord, thy Keeper, stand
Omnipotently near !
Lo ! He holds thee by thy hand,
And banishes thy fear ;
Shadows with His wings thy head ;
Guards from all impending harms :
Round thee and beneath are spread
The everlasting arms.

CHARLES WESLEY.

"I will lift up mine Eyes"

SCRIPTURE READING: 2 Kings vi. 8 to 17

Terrible tragedies of lives often come through what we miss because we fail to lift up our eyes "to the hills." This man might have been a "Valiant-for-Truth." But the latent courage withered and died because he never caught the vision of the Holy Grail.

Here is one to whom the day brings nothing but an allotted drudgery, because he has never communed with Him who says: "*I am among you as he that serveth.*"

Here is a scholar so occupied peddling with *facts* that he has lost the power of comprehending *truths*. He is grubbing for worms when he might be wrestling with angels.

There may be times when we, Christian men, find ourselves faint and dispirited. Seeing only Dothan, and the hosts of the foe compassing the city, we are crying out, "*Alas, master, how shall we do?*"

"*Lord, open our eyes that we may see.*" And lo! *the mountain is full of horses and chariots of fire!*

If, in speaking of the Hills, I seem occasionally to mix the physical and the spiritual, it is not from confusion of ideas. The two are as one to me. The grandeur of the Uplands consists not in the mountain-ranges upon which the eye rests. The most magnificent of these are but stately shadows. "*As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about His people.*"

"Things real," says one, "are types of things spiritual." Nay, there is but one thing real.

"*The things which are seen are temporal: but the things which are not seen are eternal.*"

Father, often my eyes have been "holden," that I have seen Thee not. Humbly I pray: "*Open mine eyes,*" and grant me clear vision of Thee and of Thy ways, so that I may "see life steadily, see it whole."

"Lord, open Thou mine Eyes"

O Power, more near my life than life itself
(Or what seems life to us in sense immured),
Even as the roots, shut in the darksome earth,
Share in the tree-top's joyance, and conceive
Of sunshine and wide air and wingèd things
By sympathy of nature, so do I
Have evidence of Thee so far above
Yet in and of me ! Rather Thou the root
Invisibly sustaining, hid in light,
Not darkness, or in darkness made by us.
If sometimes I must hear good men debate
Of other witness of Thyself than Thou,
As if there needed any help of ours
To nurse Thy flickering life, that else must cease,
Blown out, as 'twere a candle, by men's breath,—
My soul shall not be taken in their snare,
To change her inward surety for their doubt,
Muffled from sight in formal robes of proof :
While she can only feel herself through Thee
I fear not Thy withdrawal ; more I fear,
Seeing, to know Thee not, hoodwinked with dreams
Of signs and wonders, while, unnoticed, Thou
Walking Thy garden still, commun'st with men
Missed in the commonplace of miracle.

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

The Nearness of the Hills

SCRIPTURE READING: Psalm xlviii. 1 to 14

Born and bred in London, I am yet a hill man. The two things are akin. The call of the moorland and the mountain is always in my ears; and the glory of life is in the truth that the Heights are within reach of whomsoever will climb. The Eternal Hills are always nigh at hand. Marcus Aurelius, in his "Golden Book," could write:

"To seek out private retiring rooms for the soul, such as country villages, the seashore, and mountains, is but a mistaken simplicity, seeing that, at what time soever a man will, it is in his power to retire into himself, dwelling within the walls of a city as in a shepherd's fold of the hills."

Christ's man knows that truth in a deeper, fuller sense. Never a street so crowded, nor alley so stifling, but he who looks may from it find a pathway to the Delectable Mountains.

At every turn in the city I pass those tiny rooms placed in the very midst of the turmoil and strife, with their strangely suggestive legend, "You may telephone from here." *From here!* I enter, and in a few moments am holding personal intercourse with the unseen. Long before modern scientific discovery made them possible, the reality they shadow forth was with trustful souls. The finger of God has always been writing the gracious message that every wayfaring man may read: "You may commune from here."

Alone with Thee

Not in the silence only,
Nor in the solitude,
Let my thoughts rise to thee in praise,
My God, so great, so good :
But 'mid the din and noise
Of city conflict rude ;
In crowded street, where daily pours
The hurrying multitude.

Not on the mountain only,
Or by the lonely sea,
Or in the forest's quiet shade
Let my soul rise to Thee :
But in the hum of men,
Amid the market-crowd,
The press of mammon-worshippers
With voices fierce and loud.

Not in the morning only,
Or midnight calm and still,
When the tired day-breeze lies at rest
On the fir-shaded hill :
But all the bustling day,
'Mid toil and weariness,
Hour crowding upon troubled hour,
Like waves that never cease.

Not on the Sabbath only,
In the dear house of prayer,
Where earthly din cannot intrude,
And only God is there :
But all week long, in spite
Of care and vanity ;
That thus, even in the crowd, I may
Be still alone with Thee.

HORATIUS BONAR.

The Nearness of the Hills

SCRIPTURE READING: Ephesians v. 6 to 21

Often I pray the prayer of that great thinker, who surely was nearer to the heart of wisdom in his poetry than in his philosophy, whose "lines written in Kensington Gardens" close with the petition:

"Calm soul of all things! Make it mine
To feel, amid the city's jar,
That there abides a peace of *Thine*,
Man did not make, and cannot mar."

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

That is a prayer intensely practical, embodying a truth increasingly helpful. It turns Daily Duty into a Daily Psalm.

Let who will see chiefly the paving-stones of the city. I will look up to its spires. What need has one to be polluted with the coarse, lewd songs of the pit when he may listen to the music of Paradise? Why should he wallow in the gutter who may gaze upon the stars? He will find it hard to obey Walt Whitman's injunction to "dismiss whatever insults his soul," unless he possesses that which will uplift the soul.

To reach my office I pass by the Markets of Smithfield and Farringdon; but I come out before Sir Christopher Wren's "poem in stone"—the beautiful steeple of St. Bride's. From my office window, above all the sordid sights of the City, my eyes can rest upon the golden Cross of St. Paul's. It is the landmark of the heavenly hills, towering high over things that are of the earth earthy.

Life's Common Way

The light of God is falling
Upon life's common way ;
The Master's voice still calling,
" Come, walk with Me to-day " :
No duty can seem lowly
To him who lives with Thee,
And all of life grows holy,
O Christ of Galilee.

Who shares his life's pure pleasures,
And walks the honest road,
Who trades with heaping measures,
And lifts his brother's load,
Who turns the wrong down bluntly,
And lends the right a hand ;
He dwells in God's own country,
He tills the Holy Land.

Where human lives are thronging
In toil and pain and sin,
While cloistered hearts are longing
To bring the kingdom in,
O Christ, the Elder Brother
Of proud and beaten men,
When they have found each other,
Thy kingdom will come then.

Thy ransomed host in glory,
All souls that sin and pray,
Turn toward the cross that bore Thee ;
" Behold the Man ! " they say :
And while the Church is pleading
For all who would do good,
We hear Thy true voice leading
Our song of brotherhood.

LOUIS F. BENSON.

The Kinship of Life

SCRIPTURE READING: Psalm xxx. 1 to 12

To write the Message of the Hills is a task indeed. The peaks are infinitely varied. Each man has his own heights. Mine may not be yours. Yet what more can be expected of a mountaineer than that he shall honestly tell what he sees?

One thing my sojourn on the Hills has taught me is:

THE KINSHIP OF LIFE

If ever the pulse beats feebly, faith flags, and hope dies, then—
—“Up to the Hills!”

Up there one knows the affluence of life!

Here on the summit I am one with the air—the earth—the sky; one with the living God and with every living thing. Here I understand Amiel's saying, “A landscape is a state of the soul.” The very fragrances of earth and grass and flower; the metre of the motions in branch and blade and blossom; the breathing of the winds and the vibrations of the light; all, all mean fuller Life.

Even when alone on the Hills, “Hallelujah” seems to me the most fitting song. “God, I thank Thee for the great gift.” How glorious to be alive! Receiving that there may be giving: for what is life in its fullness but opportunity for service?

How Beautiful to be Alive!

How beautiful it is to be alive !
To wake each morn as if the Maker's grace
Did us afresh from nothingness derive
That we might sing "How happy is our case."
How beautiful it is to be alive !

To read in God's great Book, until we feel
Love for the love that gave it ; then to kneel
Close unto Him Whose truth our souls will shrive,
While every moment's joy doth more reveal
How beautiful it is to be alive !

Rather to go without what might increase
Our worldly standing, than our souls deprive
Of frequent speech with God, or than to cease
To feel, through having wasted health or peace,
How beautiful it is to be alive !

Thus ever towards man's height of nobleness
Strive still some new progression to contrive ;
Till, just as any other friend's, we press
Death's hand ; and, having died, feel none the less
How beautiful it is to be alive !

HENRY S. SUTTON.

The Kinship of Life

SCRIPTURE READING: Psalm i. 1 to 3: Ezekiel xlvii. 6 to 12 ;
Revelation xxii. 1 and 2

How manifest is this kinship of life in the time of spring ! Brother Lawrence—the seventeenth-century saint of Lorraine—received this “singular favour” of God, in that he was converted, at the age of eighteen, by seeing a tree in winter, and considering that, in the closely approaching spring, it would be bursting into new life. The *fact* of God flashed upon his soul, and remained clear and vivid throughout his life. “My God,” he cried, “Thou canst make me also to live.”

Why should that be “singular” ? Is not this the marvel, that there are so few such cases ! What are the trees but Evangelists of God ? 'Tis only the blindness and deafness of the congregation that accounts for the lack of conversions.

I would crave the insight of the Wiltshire peasant in Miss Bunston's poem.

Under a Wiltshire Apple-tree

Some folk as can afford,
So I've heard say,
Sets up a sort of cross
Right in the garden way
To mind 'em of the Lord.

But I, when I do see
Thik apple tree
An' stoopin' limb
All spread wi' moss,
I think of Him
And how He talks wi' me.

I think of God
And how He trod
That garden long ago ;
He walked, I reckon, to and fro
And then sat down
Upon the groun'
Or some low limb
What suited Him
Such as you see
On many a tree,
And on thik very one
Where I at set o' sun
Do sit and talk wi' He.

And, mornings too, I rise and come
An' sit down where the branch be low ;
A bird do sing, a bee do hum,
The flowers in the border blow,
And all my heart's so glad and clear
As pools when mists do disappear :
As pools a-laughing in the light
When mornin' air is swep' an' bright,
As pools what got all Heaven in sight,
So's my heart's cheer
When He be near.

He never pushed the garden door,
He left no footmark on the floor ;
I never heard 'Un stir nor tread
And yet His Hand do bless my head,
And when 'tis time for work to start
I takes Him with me in my heart.

And when I die, pray God I see
At very last thik apple-tree
An' stoopin' limb,
And think of Him
And all He been to me.

ANNA BUNSTON.
(MRS. DE BARY).

The Kinship of Life

SCRIPTURE READING: Isaiah xli. 19 and 20; Psalm viii.; and cxlviii. 7 to 14

There are here varying degrees of manifestation, but there is the one Life—and the One Life-Giver always working. Walking through a wood in winter time I do not see Death. Leaning over a shrivelled shrub, or standing before a leafless tree, I have reverently said, "*There is the biding of His power.*" Even stripped of foliage by the cruel grip of winter, the bare branches still reach upwards, dumbly appealing for the touch of the Living God.

I see more than a tree. The Dryads are no myths to me. I do not deem it peculiar that the man on the Hills of Assisi preached to the birds. Down in the valleys it might be considered lunacy. Up here 'tis natural and right. I take off my hat to grass, and flowers, and groves. If I meet a dog or sheep, I hail him. Or horses or birds, I give them "Good Day." Why not? We are all sharers in life—the Great Boon of God. And are not these the living creatures bidden by the Psalmist to "*praise the Lord from the earth*"? I shut myself out from Holy Communion if I neglect this recognition. For me, I cannot be other than a Reveller in "possessing my possession" of Life.

"After all," says Michael Fairless's "Roadmender," "what do we ask of Life here, or, indeed, hereafter, but leave to serve, to live, to commune with our fellow-men and with ourselves; and, from the lap of earth, to look up into the face of God?"

I, too, asked these things; the Father has granted them; and in their enjoyment I find the secret of never-fading gladness and youth.

The Tide of Life

God of the granite and the rose !
Soul of the sparrow and the bee !
The mighty tide of being flows
Through countless channels, Lord, from Thee.

It leaps to life in grass and flowers,
Through every grade of being runs ;
Till, from creation's radiant towers,
Its glory flames in stars and suns.

Know that, like birds, and streams, and flowers,
The life that moves you is divine :
Nor time, nor space, nor human powers,
Your god-like spirit can confine.

God of the granite and the rose !
Soul of the sparrow and the bee !
The mighty tide of being flows,
Through all Thy creatures, back to Thee.

Thus round and round the circle runs,
A mighty sea without a shore ;
While men and angels, stars and suns,
Unite to praise Thee evermore.

L. DOTEN.

The Procession

Climbing Dawn upon the mountains,
Drifting gold and amethyst,
Fleeting wonder of the mist,
Floating wonder of the cloud,—
Gazing on you, breaketh from us
Jubilate Deo.

Shining Noon upon the mountains,
Spinner that from blue to red
Spinning seven-coloured thread
Weaves one wide fair web of white,—
Gazing on you, breaketh from us
Jubilate Deo.

Golden Evening on the mountains,
Spirit of enchantment yours,
Spirit of the heathery moors,
Spirit of the bluebell woods,—
Gazing on you, breaketh from us
Jubilate Deo.

Gentle Moonlight on the mountains,
Did the angels weave the pale
Shimmering beauty of your veil
To the sound of songs in heaven ?
Gazing on you, breaketh from us
Jubilate Deo.

AMY WILSON CARMICHAEL.

UP TO THE HILLS

PART TWO

The Mountains

Let none but priests or lowly men draw nigh
Unto the lofty mountains, to invade
The awful sanctuary God hath built
Upon their desert sides.

Behold how He has gifted this His stern
And sacred dwelling-place. Tempests and storms
And the mysterious voices of loud winds,
A thousand lights of beauty, so intense
They make men weep for love of them, and shades
That move obedient to conceal from us
The path of some dear Angel, and o'er all
Bridges of rainbow thrown from peak to peak
In mystic arches, signs of covenant :—
These are His gifts unto the mighty hills.
And the blue skies are bid by Him to stoop
Unto the mountain-top, that Earth may blend
With Heaven ; and alway from their cloven sides
The music of ten thousand springs is heard,
Gushing with water—holiest element,
Wherein the power of our New Birth is laid :
Fed ever from the dews of Heaven that fall
When night is coldest ; and free liberal airs
That roam from the Mountains, and that come
We know not whence, move o'er the pool unseen,
Like the pure Dove that broods above the Font.
—Fresh are those sources, though no shade is nigh,
Fresh as the wells that stand in natural rock
In summer woods or violet-scented grove,
With lowly flowers all round.

F. W. FABER.

The Companions of the Hill-side

SCRIPTURE READING : Matthew xviii. 1 to 14

Will it appear strange that first among those who have led me up to the Hills I place a little child ? I must thus testify if my testimony is to be true. I believe that the Blessed One did not err when, in the midst of the contending Disciples, He put a child, and said, " Become as he is, if ye would enter the Kingdom."

A great and wise woman of later days has taught us the same truth, when, after speaking of the men of old being guided by angels forth from the city of destruction, she says :

" We see no white-winged angels now. But yet men are led away from threatening destruction ; a hand is put into theirs, which leads them forth gently towards a calm and bright land, so that they look no more backward ; *and the hand may be a little child's.*"

GEORGE ELIOT.

So have I found it. Children have been saviours of a nature which, but for them, would have hardened into selfishness. Theirs is one of God's great educative Ministries of Appeal ; great not so much in what it brings to us as in what it draws from us. They belong to the hills of God. Here there is nothing between me and my Maker. Is not that the Divine simplicity of relation the Father desires from us ? "*As a child.*" They are weak who know it not. That simplicity is our strength. Remembering my debt, I never knowingly pass any little children without offering a thanksgiving, and a swift, silent prayer for the Saviour's protection, and for His benediction to rest upon them.

The Child and the Song

“God made the shore,
Rocks and sand and sea,
Little lovely shells,
He made me.

God feeds the fish
Swimming in the sea,
Feeds them every day,
He feeds me.

God rules the tides
Of the mighty sea,
God will never fail,
He guides me.

God's behind the storm
Lashing up the sea ;
God's within the calm,
He loves me.

Though I may forget,
He loves faithfully :
Always God goes on
Loving me.”

And the song dropped into the heart of the man,
And he suddenly knew
That the God Who was loving the child
Loved the universe too :
It was love's fiery law he saw working,
And not love's decrease ;
And he blessed the young child and her God,
And had peace.

AMY WILSON CARMICHAEL.

The Companions of the Hill-side

SCRIPTURE READING: Revelation vii. 9 to 17

And how can I speak of the noble and holy host with whom he may consort who is on the heights? Poets, seers, prophets, masters of music, thinkers, leaders in action and philanthropy, warriors and saints of God. How can a man be poor who companions with these? Whenever I truly read a great book I am led up to the mountain-top with a great soul. Have you realised that? The man is sharing his thoughts with *me* and revealing his very nature to *me*. And then I turn to the dictionary of biography and read that he "died" in such-and-such a year. Why, he breathes his spirit into me, and I am revived! This is the year of his *life*.

And when one thinks of the closer communion with "acquaintances, friends and lovers,"—those who have gone from us, those, also, who remain—one is constrained to say: Surely there is nothing greater in human experience than this Companionship of the Hills!

The Saints of God

Like shining stars they passed away,
But left a path of light behind,
That we who live and strive as they
May learn to seek that we may find.

And from the depth of lone despair
Our faltering eyes that pathway see
O'er which they passed in faith and prayer
To find their rest, dear Lord, in Thee.

All praise to Thee that by Thy power
They went in hope through bitterest pain,
For in temptation's awful hour
Our wavering hearts grow strong again.

All praise that on a stormless coast
They sing in peace around Thy throne ;
And yet, O God, we praise Thee most
For saints that we have seen and known.

Not great, not noble, not renowned,
But men and women like as we ;
Yet, sorrowing, in them we found
Thy tenderness and sympathy.

We saw them when the tempter strove
To steal from them their perfect rest ;
No subtle wiles their souls could move,
And then, O Lord, we loved Thee best.

We watched them when the storm of life
Grew loud and harsh with roar and din,
And then we learned how in the strife
Thy power can keep men's souls from sin.

Thou dwellest in the highest heaven,
With Thee is neither time nor space.
And yet to us on earth is given,
In these to see Thee face to face.

We praise Thee for that mighty host
Who sing in peace to Thee above ;
And yet, dear Lord, we praise Thee most
For saints whom now we know and love.

A. MARY R. DOBSON.

The Springs

SCRIPTURE READING: Joshua xv. 16 to 19; John iv. 6 to 15

Another secret of the hills is that

HERE THE SPRINGS HAVE BIRTH

(a) What joy equals that of discovering a spring for one's self? Thousands may have found it before me, but what care I! It is now *my* spring. Mine—that at it I may slake my thirst. Mine—that I may direct others to it. Mine—that I may find for this fount of the “Everlasting Hills” some new outlet into the valleys below.

There is no novelty when one considers the names of the springs. They are at once old and new. They are wells by which the patriarchs sat: Truth, Righteousness, Love, Purity, Hope, Faith.

Their number is small. It is not the many things that engage us, but the few things that satisfy us: these make life. Would you accomplish more? Then deal with less, but let your dealings be with things eternal. It is the *intensive* work that alone is truly *extensive*.

Take “faith” (word often so flippantly spoken), and heed the reminder of Robert Louis Stevenson:

“Our faith is not the highest truth that we perceive, but the highest that we have been able to assimilate into the very texture and method of our thinking.”

That is the faith that saves. Brother, when you find a spring, drink deeply of what is yours.

The Fountains of Life

Amid the hills retired
A fount began its flow,
And riches soon acquired
To bless the lands below ;
And though its wealth it freely spent,
It grew the richer as it went.

For solitary hills,
From stores of rain and snow,
Contributed new rills,
Their sympathy to show ;
And soon the river on the plains
As monarch of their plenty reigns.

Our God in hours retired
Can open in our heart
A fount of good desired,
And such supplies impart,
That more it has, the more it gives,
And all our life upon it lives.

O sacred stream of love,
Hast thou begun thy flow,
And from the hills above
Reached now the lands below ?
Then, blessed by thee, life's common field
Will corn and fruit and herbage yield.

THOMAS T. LYNCH.

The Springs. A Parable of the Well

SCRIPTURE READING: Genesis xxvi. 15 to 32; Isaiah xii. 3

(b) They are *springs*. Their transparency shows them to be coming from a living source. So be my utterance of God's truths.

I would gaze often into those depths, so that behind my speaking forth of the elemental truths there may be the consciousness of their greatness. In the word-symbols of my speech let me be a searcher for the spring of thought.

(c) I would remember that these are *my* springs. No echoing will suffice in him who would speak for his Lord. Only a *voice* glorifies God. Rhetoric is but tinsel: thy thought the only gold. Several times a day the business man is rung up with the question, "Are you there?" It has new force to me now. "Are *you* there?" demands the hearer of the preacher. "Are *you* there?" in your message, in your work. It is the demand that the Lord Himself makes of the man called His servant. "*Covet earnestly the best gifts,*" and always covet that sincerity which is the dynamic of speech.

"Far better in its place the lowliest bird
Should sing aright to Him the lowliest Song,
Than that a Seraph strayed should take the word,
And sing it wrong."

JEAN INGELOW.

Let me remember, too, what "grand, rough old Martin Luther" taught: "His word thunders whose life lightens."

*Hidden Springs**"Blessèd are the meek"*

A quiet heart, submissive, meek,
Father, do Thou bestow,
Which more than granted, will not seek
To have, or give, or know.
Each little hill then holds its gift
Forth to my joying eyes;
Each mighty mountain then doth lift
My spirit to the skies.

Lo, then the running water sounds
With gladsome, secret things!
The silent water more abounds,
And more the hidden springs.
Live murmurs then the trees will blend
With all the feathered song;
The waving grass low tribute lend
Earth's music to prolong.

The sun will cast great crowns of light
On waves that anthems roar:
The dusky billows break at night
In flashes on the shore.
Each harebell, each white lily's cup,
The hum of hidden bee,
Yea, every odour floating up,
The insect revelry,—

Each hue, each harmony divine,
The holy world about,
Its soul will send forth into mine,
My soul to widen out.
And thus the great earth I shall hold
A perfect gift of Thine;
Richer by these, a thousand-fold,
Than if broad lands were mine.

GEORGE MACDONALD.

The Place of Outlook

SCRIPTURE READING: Deuteronomy iii. 23 to 29; xxxiv. 1 to 4

Another message have the Hills given me.

(a) Once it was my lot to be the guest of a man whose house was set on a hill. The dwelling bore a curious name, which he explained as meaning

“THE PLACE OF OUTLOOK”

Thank God that every one of us may have such a dwelling-place.

Some men of great promise live dwarfed and wasted lives because, on reaching the slope, they say: “Here’s a hill; we will *burrow in it!*” They hardly ever see the plains of Moab, and never climb to behold the glory from Pisgah’s height. Let us build the oratory of the soul upon the mountain-side. Too easily we make it in a cave or cellar.

(b) The Outlook is needed also as a corrective to my narrow conceptions of personal experiences. I misjudge through having no sense of perspective and proportion. This difficulty confronting me, this sorrow, or this task, looms so large when I am on the road that, viewed near at hand, it shuts out the very heavens. But that is a trick of the road. Up on the next hill of outlook it is seen in true perspective, and proves to be but part of the “way” along which the All-wise Guide is leading me, Who saith: “A whole I planned.” Although I may not “see all,” I take the path again, an undaunted pilgrim who “trusts Him and is not afraid.”

We thank Thee

For sun, and also shadow-time,
For darkness and the day,
Our Father-God, we give Thee thanks
And trust Thy love alway.

The love that leads through paths of shade
Or those that feel the sun ;
In level ways, or those that toil
And o'er the mountains run.

Such ways slope off and up to God,
The earth is left afar ;
The silence of the sky is ours,
And ours the morning star.

For sun and darkness, heat and shade,
We give our thanks to Thee,
From whom come rest and strength and hope,
And angels' company !

EDWARD AUGUSTUS RAND.

The Place of Outlook

SCRIPTURE READING: Matthew xxviii. 16 to 20

(c) The Outlook helps me in judging certain companions of the way. Down in the road I have passed some whose big style, whose swagger, and whose scornful threats, as they have stalked by me, have made me think they must be great ones to be feared. But, viewed from the heights, they proved to be merely some of the swarm of human midgets who buzzed a little louder than the rest. Whereat I was greatly comforted.

(d) It is, though, for service of God without fear of man that the Outlook is most needed. The sacred record runs: "*Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying: "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore and teach all nations."* To that "*appointed*" starting-place for all our labour we need to climb back again and again.

Our service is poor stuff, because we make it so parochial. But no task done for Christ can be small. Whenever and wherever I obey the Lord's "*go,*" "*teach,*" "*make disciples,*" let me listen for His "*All power is given unto Me.*" That is the measure of my work.

From my "*place of Outlook*" on the hills of God, I looked, and saw the hosts of His pilgrim-servants treading many paths. And lo! all paths lead at last into a great Highway. Far off, I could dimly see the Eternal City. Its palaces shone as pure gold. And, listening, I heard the triumphal chant of the redeemed: "*Thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.*"

"Thine is the Kingdom"

Deeper than voice of the falling of waters
Rolled the world-music the ages along ;
Earth at the last, in her sons and her daughters,
Was crowned with the glory of song.

How did an hour the eternal inherit ?
Who shall declare when the marvel began ?
How budded silence to speech of the spirit,
Or dust, to the soul of a man ?

"Thine is the Kingdom"—'twas heard in the onset
Low 'mid the storm of the world in its youth,
"Thine is the Kingdom," shall sound at the sunset,
The victory psalm of the Truth.

Prophets have spoken, and prophets are speaking,
Vain is the doom of the cross and the thorn ;
Long is the journey, but still we are seeking
The City that shone to the morn.

Pilgrims of hope, though the triumph be distant,
March we anew, with our hope for reward ;
On, with the standard ; if baffled, persistent ;
Crusaders and knights of the Lord.

God of the soul and its infinite story,
Light of our being, we name Thee again ;
"Thine is the Kingdom, the power and the glory,
For ever and ever. Amen."

W. G. TARRANT.

The Place of the Silences

SCRIPTURE READING: I Kings xix. 4 to 13; Isaiah xxx. 15;
Habakkuk ii. 20

Again, the hill-top is

THE PLACE OF THE SILENCES;

and who can estimate their power in the building up of the soul?
How essential to its truest strength:

"My soul, be thou all hushed before God"; "Be still and know"; "Be still, and see"; "In quietness and confidence shall be your strength."

So the saints in all the ages have found. It is the man of the Busy Hand who most needs to be the man of the Quiet Heart.

The quiet receiving of Divine power is the more sacred side of prayer, and power that is instilled is power that abides. *"I will be as the dew unto Israel: and he shall strike his roots as Lebanon."*

When the disciples on the mountain-top saw their Risen Lord *"they worshipped Him."* Their doubts were changed into the wonder of awe.

Then, the wonder begat silence. The very stillness had for these disciples (as it may have for us) a ministry of quietening and of healing. Their speech had been employed in discussing their own doubts; their silence enabled them to hear the certainties of their Lord. Speaking to God is but part of worship. Its fuller significance is learned when we are listening for God to speak to us; and true worship is always a prelude to revelation.

Said Thomas à Kempis: "Blessed are the ears that gladly receive the pulses of the Divine whisper. Blessed are the eyes that are shut to outward things, but intent on things eternal." To reach the mountain-top, and to see and hear the Lord, is given only to those who will climb; and to realise these beatitudes means putting forth strong and steady effort, controlling desire and will in order to listen.

Silent Hours

Lord, when in silent hours I muse
Upon myself and Thee,
I seem to hear the stream of life
That runs invisibly.

Then know I, what I oft forget,
How fleeting are my days ;
Remember me, my God, nor let
My end be my dispraise.

O, think upon me for my good,
Though little good I do ;
My hope, and my forgiving friend,
Thou hast been hitherto.

And I would live in such a course,
That men to me may say,
" O, whence hast thou thy joy and force ?
What is thy secret stay ? "

My joy, when truest joy I have,
It comes to me from heaven ;
My strength, when I from weakness rise,
Is by Thy Spirit given.

And while He shines, as He has shone
Whom Thou hast made my stay,
Life can but gently float me on,
Not hurry me away.

THOMAS T. LYNCH.

The Singer

He sang of the peace that lies on the sea,
When the winds are leashed and the sun leaps free,
And the deep smiles over its tragedy :
 But never the peace had he.

He sang of the dreams, unworldly and rare,
Of fugitive beauty, divinely fair,
Of art that is born of the light and air ;
 But the stormy soul had he.

He sang of the love, all mighty and blest,
That swings the gold doors back far in the west,
Heart's ultimate homeland of perfect rest ;
 But the exile heart had he.

He sang of an empire wondrous and free
As the hills and the moors and the wide, wide sea,
Whence the sins of the world will banished be ;
 But a bondsman still was he.

And then for a space he sang no more,
Nor wandered afar as heretofore,
But prayed for the child-heart o'er and o'er ;
 So tired of himself was he.

And the dear God gave what he asked that day,
And the heart grew blithe that was aged and grey,
And he sings as the winds sing when they play,
 For the joy of liberty.

FREDK. A. JACKSON.

UP TO THE HILLS

PART THREE

We are drawn by cords which come
From out eternity.

F. W. FABER.

Heaven above is softer blue,
Earth around is sweeter green ;
Something lives in every hue,
Christless eyes have never seen.
Birds with gladder songs o'erflow,
Flowers with brighter beauties shine,
Since I knew, as now I know,
I am His and He is mine.

G. WADE ROBINSON.

Earth's treasures waste with use ; but
Thine,
O Lord ! by lessening grow ;
From love's pure fount the more we take,
The more the waters flow.

FRANCIS TURNER PALGRAVE.

There is no distance in the land of spirit,
No time or space for those whose feet
have trod
Where passed the piercèd Feet, for they
inherit
A deathless union in the Heart of God.

DOROTHY FRANCES GURNEY.

The Place of the Silences

SCRIPTURE READING: Psalm xcv. 3 to 7; xcvi. 6 to 10

Sometimes the very silence of God ministers as a holy message. In it spirit meets with spirit. When visiting that shrine of strength and beauty in the quiet Surrey village of Compton, standing in the chapel before George Frederick Watts's Altar-piece of "God the All-pervading," I was on the mountain-top; and in the silence of contemplation there came to my deepest being, through the symbol of line and colour, a message that no spoken word could have uttered. At the foot of the Altar-painting is the design representing the seven gifts of spirit, which, according to the mediæval rendering, given in archaic spelling, are: "Ye giftes of wisdome, pittie, strengthe, comfait, understanding"; and, last, the two gifts of "cunning" (knowing) and "dreed."

That sacred dread is fast becoming one of the lost gifts of the Church. Men do not now bring it to the Altar of God. They are forgetting to worship with bared heads, sometimes not even with bowed heads. We are losers by this. We must restore the gift of dread to the Altar of devotion. In our own souls at least cultivate it. Be often on the hill-tops alone with God, where the "silence of eternity is interpreted by love." It is the awe causing the soul to be still before "*the High and Lofty One that inhabiteth Eternity, whose Name is Holy*," which makes possible the realisation of His gracious word, "*I will dwell with him that is of a humble and contrite spirit*." In the silence, with my spirit-gift of holy dread, there comes to me the "knowing" of the All-pervading God.

Worship

O holy God, I ask this boon of Thee :—
Be mine, in truth, a soul that worships ; free
From all profane and trivial thoughts, and filled
With reverential faith ; a soul all stilled
In hush of awe ; since Thou, the God most high,
To lowly, contrite men, art ever nigh.

In silence of majestic hills I hear
Thy mystic message, and, with Godly fear,
I kneel adoring Thee, the Lord of might,
Who, in Thy works—Creator infinite—
Dost unto man unveil Thy thoughts, and there
Reveal Thy glorious presence everywhere.

But still more real, more close, art Thou, great Lord,
In Christ th' eternal Son, th' incarnate Word ;
Here beats Thy heart ; here love is made to live ;
Here love, in sacrifice, itself doth give ;
O conquering Love ! low at the Cross I fall,
And, worshipping, to Thee surrender all.

Now, life itself is worship ; for in me
The Christ is dwelling, and I live to Thee ;
Thine all-pervading presence is made known
Within the soul ; I cannot be alone,
For Thou, to me, art life ; and I adore
Thy matchless grace, and worship evermore.

CAREY BONNER.

The Mount of Vision: The Cross

SCRIPTURE READING: ROMANS vi. 1 to 11

It is but a natural sequence of truth that the Mount of Silences should become THE MOUNT OF VISION AND OF COMMUNION.

To the man of the hushed soul, the bowed head, and the closed eyes, as to none else, there are vouchsafed revelation and insight.

At Chartreuse, in the Alps, he who stands on a hill and looks up to the apparently inaccessible heights of the far-off, spire-like rocks, may see the Cross on peak after peak; and legend hath it that angel hands carved those crosses there. This thing is sure, that he who will climb to the Uplands alone sees the true Cross.

From the Hill, "I have seen the Lord." Being alone, in the stillness, I looked up to the farther Hills, and saw there the Highest Rock, and, lo! its side was cleft. And there was the Cross; upon it the Saving King; and above it, blazoned in a light that burned, were the words: "I claim thee for the Heights." Kneeling and adoring, I heard the message of redeeming Love: "As I give Myself for thee, so give thyself to Me."

Calvary for me had meaning. "Crux in corde." A Calvary in the heart. "*Reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.*"

In this I had "received the Atonement." Not my own, but His. Through yielding up, I possess. My rising is Christ uplifting me. In weakness I find strength.

"None other Lamb; none other Name;
None other Hope in heaven or earth, or sea;
None other Hiding-place from guilt and shame;
None beside Thee."

Christ for me and in me

Oh, Jesus Christ, grow Thou in me,
And all things else recede ;
My heart be daily nearer Thee,
From sin be daily freed !

Each day, let Thy supporting might
My weakness still embrace ;
My darkness vanish in Thy light,
Thy life my death efface.

In Thy bright beams, which on me fall,
Fade every evil thought ;
That I am nothing, Thou art all,
I would be daily taught.

More of Thy glory let me see,
Thou Holy, Wise and True ;
I would Thy living image be
In joy and sorrow too.

Fill me with gladness from above,
Hold me by strength divine ;
Lord, let the glow of Thy great love
Through my whole being shine !

Weak is the power of sloth and pride,
And vain desires are still,
When, to Thy realm and Thee allied,
I haste to do Thy will.

Let faith in Thee and in Thy might
My every motive move,
Be Thou alone my soul's delight,
My passion and my love !

JOHANN CASPAR LAVATER.

(Tr. Mrs. Dr. H. B. Smith.)

The Mount of Vision: the Cross

SCRIPTURE READING: Galatians vi. 12 to 18

I can in a sense understand and admire the man—hailed as a strong leader by many—who declared:

"Out of the night that covers me,
Black as the pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods there be
For my unconquerable soul.
It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the Master of my fate,
I am the Captain of my soul."

W. E. HENLEY.

It is splendid paganism; but the man dominant for nineteen centuries as a master-mind, and holding an imperial sway over thought and life, was one who wrote:

"I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself for me." "Paul, a bond-slave of Jesus Christ." "Whose I am, and Whom I serve."

This was the Strong Man, who could make his boast: "I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me."

As for me, I can but testify with him who says:

"I have not keys for all the locks,
And may not pick them. Truth will bear
Neither rude handling, nor unfair
Evasion of its wards, and mocks
Whoever would falsely enter there.

But all through life I see a Cross,
Where sons of God yield up their breath:
There is no gain except by loss,
There is no life except by death,
And no full vision but by Faith,
Nor glory but by bearing shame,
Nor justice but by taking blame."

WALTER C. SMITH.

My Saviour, interpret this for me!
Here, for all my days, is the secret of life learned on the
Mount of Vision.

Bond-servant of Jesus Christ

Make me a captive, Lord,
And then I shall be free ;
Force me to render up my sword,
And I shall conqueror be.
I sink in life's alarms
When by myself I stand ;
Imprison me within Thine arms,
And strong shall be my hand.

My heart is weak and poor
Until it master find :
It has no spring of action sure—
It varies with the wind :
It cannot freely move
Till Thou hast wrought its chain ;
Enslave it with Thy matchless love,
And deathless it shall reign.

My power is faint and low
Till I have learned to serve :
It wants the needed fire to glow,
It wants the breeze to nerve ;
It cannot drive the world
Until itself be driven :
Its flag can only be unfurled
When Thou shalt breathe from heaven.

My will is not my own
Till Thou hast made it Thine ;
If it would reach a monarch's throne
It must its crown resign :
It only stands unbent
Amid the clashing strife,
When on Thy bosom it has leant,
And found in Thee its life.

GEORGE MATHESON.

Vision and Service

SCRIPTURE READING: Matthew xxv. 31 to 40

Yet is there one last truth to which all that has been said is related. The Hills themselves are but part of the Landscape. So all they connote, their Nearness, the Kinship of Life, the Companionships, the Springs, the Outlook, the Silences, and the Vision: all are ours only in order that the tasks of the work-a-day world may be the more bravely and faithfully fulfilled.

Henry Septimus Sutton wrote a poem which, in the first edition of his writings, he entitled "The Hills." It purported to be the utterance of a man who had made the hill-top his abiding place.

He would heed no cry for help from the plains beneath, but would remain "a lover of the Mount and of its wisdom hoary." "For," said he:

"On my Mountain one short hour,
Plucking a fruit, culling a flower,
Must ever in the end
More blessing lend
Mankind,
Than long years spent below,
Wiping the tears that flow,
Loosing the chains that bind."

These sentiments were lauded by some literary critics, who failed to catch the subtle irony of the poet's tone. For, in the later edition of his poems, Mr. Sutton (with whom it was my privilege to speak on the matter a little while before his death) changed the title to "Mount Perilous of Pride," and, in his Foreword, wrote:

Seest thou really naught amiss?
And stands his Mountain well?
*Its edge is the brink of a precipice,
Down falling sheer to hell!*"

Few warnings are more needed by all of us than that. All true vision must be translated into service.

A Hymn of Service

Where cross the crowded ways of life,
Where sound the cries of race and clan,
Above the noise of selfish strife,
We hear Thy voice, O Son of man !

In haunts of wretchedness and need,
On shadowed thresholds dark with fears,
From paths where hide the lures of greed,
We catch the vision of Thy tears.

From tender childhood's helplessness,
From woman's grief, man's burdened toil,
From famished souls, from sorrow's stress,
Thy heart has never known recoil.

The cup of water given for Thee
Still holds the freshness of Thy grace ;
Yet long these multitudes to see
The sweet compassion of Thy face.

O Master, from the mountain-side,
Make haste to heal these hearts of pain,
Among these restless throngs abide,
O tread the city's streets again,

Till sons of men shall learn Thy love
And follow where Thy feet have trod ;
Till glorious from Thy heaven above
Shall come the city of our God.

FRANK MASON NORTH.

Vision and Service

SCRIPTURE READING : Luke ix. 28 to 42

When Raphael painted his Cartoon of the Transfiguration he, with the infallible insight of genius, placed in the foreground the group of the sufferers in the valley waiting for the ministry of human helpfulness. The rapt vision of the Mount is a hindrance and curse unless it is an inspiration to that ministry.

We know salvation as a great reality only that we may be saviours. Too often, like Benedetto in "*Il Santo*," we have to confess : "I have felt the sin of the world with the repulsion which shrinks from it, and not with the fiery sorrow which braves it and wrests souls from its clutches."

With this my message closes. As we face our life-tasks, let us thank God that to the service, of which I have spoken as possible to the men of the Hills, there is no end. Those whom Christ doth lead have found even in their holiest hours of Communion and Vision that there are Higher Ranges of hills beyond. God's best is yet in store. The day will come when of you and of me men will say, "He is dead." Nay, rather would we have it said, "His Master has called him up to the Higher Hills."

Of vision ? Yea : "*For they shall see His face.*"

Of transfiguration ? Yea : "*For they shall be like Him.*"

Of ministry ? Yea. O Thou ministering Saviour, we bless Thee that from this Thou wilt never separate us : "*For His servants shall serve Him ; and His Name shall be in their foreheads.*"

Even so, Amen,
Lord Jesus.

C. B.

Hymn of the Upward Way

Lord of the Upward Way !

My Guide Divine !

Where Thou hast placed Thy feet

May I place mine,

And move and march wherever Thou hast trod,
Keeping face-forward up the Hill of God.

Give me the heart, to hear

Thy voice and will,

That without fault or fear

I may fulfil

Thy purpose, with a glad and holy zest,
Like one who would not bring less than his best.

Give me the eye to see

Each chance to serve,

Then send me strength to rise

With steady nerve,

And leap at once with kind and helpful deed,
To the sure succour of a soul in need.

Give me the good stout arm

To shield the right,

And wield Thy sword of Truth

With all my might,

That in the warfare I must wage for Thee,
More than a victor I may ever be.

Lord of The Upward Way !

My Guide Divine !

Where Thou hast placed Thy feet

May I place mine ;

And when Thy last call comes serene and clear,
Calm may my answer be, " Lord, I am here ! "

WALTER J. MATHAMS.

"But the Servants knew"

SCRIPTURE READING: Mark x. 35 to 45; John ii. 1 to 10; vii. 17; and ix. 4.

When looking at things in the light of eternal truth I learn that knowledge is something more than the result of an intellectual process. It is a relationship of the soul with God. The process leading me to it must therefore cover more than the exercise of my thinking faculties. It must be an act in which my will is concerned. Further, it must affect the doings of my daily life.

The New Testament describes that act in two of its phases. One phase is "love." *"Every one that loveth, knoweth God,"* says St. John. But true love can never be an end in itself. Love that does not express itself fades and dies.

I am then led on to the deeper words of John's Master and mine: *"If any man will do His will, he shall know"; "if ye love Me keep My commandments."*

Here is the other phase. Love is translated into action by obedience.

We read that at Cana *"the servants which drew the water knew."* Henceforth, I will count myself the thrall of Christ, and live simply to do His bidding hour by hour. At the moment, mine may be an act of blind obedience; but, later, the eyes of the soul are opened, and, through that act, I see and know. The repeated act becomes a habit, and by the habit of obedience I am brought into the relationship with God which alone can bring knowledge of His will.

Thus—the service of love is the key of knowledge.

The prayer springing from the depth of my being shall therefore be: "My Father, enable me to reduce my willing and doing to the simplicity of Jesus my Lord, whose life was summed up in one thing:

"I come to do Thy will, O God."

Thorough Service

Give Him brain and breast,
And thy ready hand ;
He is wisest, best,
For Him stir or stand.

Give thyself and thine,
Life and livelihood,
Still thy less resign
For His greater good.

Silence give, or word,
As his need may ask ;
Oftener seen than heard,
Toil thou at thy task.

Give Him cup and plate,
Fill them with thy best ;
Say not, " It is late ;
Trouble not my rest."

See Him in the street,
Serve Him in the shop,
Sow with Him thy wheat,
House for Him thy crop.

Sail with Him at sea,
Work with Him on land ;
Tell Him faithfully
All that thou hast planned.

Love and learn Him more,
As the common friend ;
Joys thou thus shalt store
For the happy end.

THOMAS T. LYNCH.

Duty and Ministry

SCRIPTURE READING: Job xxix. 11 to 16; Luke xvii. 7 to 10

Happy he who at the day's end can say, "I have done something to-day."

Not unworthily of the theme has a Christian man sung in our times:

"Duty done is the soul's fireside,
Blest who keeps that ingle wide."

And such "duty," as another sings, "is a path that all may tread."

The ordinary day's work is honoured and sanctified by it. . . . And surely still more true is it of some piece of work done for Christ's sake and Christ's only.

To have seen a fallen brother regain his feet; to have trained a little child; to have watched a sick one through to the end; above all, to have stood by and prayed and spoken while a soul passed out of darkness into light—that is a consummation, a fact accomplished, over which too many praises can never be sung.

R. W. BARBOUR.

My Life

Slowly he yielded his breath,
Silently floated away:
Was it to sleep in a night of death,
Or to wake in endless day?

Is there a truth in my dream
When I think I see my love
Waiting for me at the golden gates
Of the City of Peace above ?

Or do we only live
The life of a separate soul,
When spirit to fleshly form is wed
In an undivided whole ?

Ah ! for the power to tell
What is the riddle's end,—
What we are now, and whence we came,
And to what goal we tend.

• • • • •

Yet will I live my life,
Dim though its mystery be,
Not wholly lost to sense, nor yet
Absorbed in what I see.

For me—to have made one soul
The better for my birth :
To have added but one flower
To the garden of the earth :

To have struck one blow for truth
In the daily fight with lies :
To have done one deed of right
In the face of calumnies :

To have sown in the souls of men
One thought that will not die—
To have been a link in the chain of life :
Shall be immortality.

EDWIN HATCH.

Hymn of the City

Not in the solitude
Alone may man commune with Heaven, or see
Only in savage wood
And sunny vale the present Deity,
Or only hear His voice
Where the winds whisper and the waves rejoice.

Even here do I behold
Thy steps, Almighty!—here, amidst the crowd
Through the great city rolled,
With everlasting murmur deep and loud,
Choking the ways that wind
'Mongst the proud piles, the work of human-kind.

Thy golden sunshine comes
From the round heaven, and on their dwellings lies,
And lights their inner homes ;
For them Thou fill'st with air the unbounded skies,
And givest them the stores
Of ocean, and the harvests of its shores.

Thy Spirit is around,
Quickening the restless mass that sweeps along ;
And this eternal sound,
Voices and footfalls of the numberless throng,
Like the resounding sea,
Or like the rainy tempest, speaks of Thee.

And when the hours of rest
Come, like a calm upon the mid-sea brine,
Hushing its billowy breast,
The quiet of that moment too is Thine ;
It breathes of Him Who keeps
The vast and helpless city while it sleeps.

W. C. BRYANT.

" I AM THY GOD "

Going on After God

Stay, if you choose,
In the track where the crowds have trod,
Gaining what still they lose. . . .
Following the star in its flight,
On through the gloom of the night,
Through the deep valleys, and over
the height.
I am going on, after God !

Stay, if you choose,
Where the clatter and sin never cease,
Seeking what still they refuse. . . .
Far past life's passionate crying,
The selling of Fame and the buying,
Where the great silences softly are
lying,
I seek for the palace of peace.

Stay, if you choose ;
Yet Love and Life wait in the way,—
Alack, what beauty ye lose !
Peace, where before ye knew pain,
And Faith, where believing was vain,—
And hope that was dying is quick-
ened again,
As we pass to the joy of God's day.

Stay, if you choose ;
Yet, alack ! low and chill as the sod
Is the life ye must use.
Ah, walk where the weary have need,
Bringing love where the crucified
bleed :
To wake the dumb yearning to
utterance and deed,
I am going on after God.

L. MACLEAN WATT.
(From "*The Tryst*.")

"Your Father knoweth"

SCRIPTURE READING: Matthew vi. 6 to 15

I will engage to say that, if anyone is ever troubled with doubts about prayer, these two simple words, "Our Father," if he can once really believe them in their full richness and depth, will make the doubts vanish in a moment, and prayer seem the most natural and reasonable of all acts.

It is because we are God's children, not merely His creatures, that He will have us pray. Because He is educating us to know Him; to know Him, not merely to be an Almighty Power, but a living, loving Person; not merely an irresistible Fate, but a Father who delights in the love of His children, who wishes to shape them into His own likeness, and make them fellow-workers with Him; therefore it is that He will have us pray.

Doubtless He *could* have given us everything without our asking; for He *does* already give us almost everything without our asking. But He wishes to educate us as His children; to make us trust in Him; to make us love Him; to make us work for Him of our own free wills, in the great battle which He is carrying on against evil; and that He can only do by teaching us to pray to Him.

I say it reverently, but firmly: as far as we can see, God cannot educate us to know Him, the living, willing, loving Father, unless He teaches us to open our hearts to Him, and to ask Him freely for what we want, just *because* He knows what we want already.

CHARLES KINGSLEY.

Say "Father "

Thou Law without, Thou life within,
Whom knowing I but know in part,
Thou wilt not deem the silence sin
That cannot name Thee as Thou art.

The elders named Thee as they could,
The children lisp what they have heard,
And all we long for, wise and good,
Is pictured in one hallowed word.

Of old my heart hath held it dear,
I listen for its music now,
Again that greatest Name I hear—
Yet greater than all names art Thou.

I feel Thou knowest all of me,
A child that cannot walk alone ;
Oh, guide me till I learn to see
And know at last as I am known.

Thy child indeed, may I begin
To know and love, as ne'er before,
The Law without, the Life within,
The Father, now and evermore.

W. G. TARRANT.

All-powerful and All-pitiful

SCRIPTURE READING: Isaiah xl. i-ii

The All-great is the All-loving too. From the thunder comes a human voice, which says to me, "O heart I made, a Heart beats here." I cannot part with the infinite Majesty, and just as little can I lose sight of the ineffable Tenderness.

He measures the waters in the hollow of His hand; He takes up the isles as a very little thing; all nations before Him are as nothing. Thus He can prevail against my fiercest temptations; He can satisfy my profoundest needs; He can deal with my foulest sins; He can put to flight my most persistent and remorseless enemies; He can perfect that which concerneth me. I rejoice in the limitlessness of His power.

Ah! but He shall feed His flock like a shepherd; He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom. His graciousness is deeper, larger, more victorious than a mother's. Thus His compassions will never cease to remember me. Though I am poor and needy, yet will He think upon me. A bruised reed, a smoking taper am I; but He will not break my frail strength, He will not quench my flickering light; by His grace I shall yet be a pillar in the Temple and a golden candlestick in the Holy Place. Shall I not give thanks ardently, constantly, at the recollection of His love?

God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that Power belongeth unto God; also unto Thee, O Lord, belongeth Mercy. The Power without the Mercy would be titanic, awful; it would crush me to the earth. The Mercy without the Power would fail when it sought to deliver me; its intentions would be generous, but it would be unable to carry them out. But He gives me both. His omnipotence prevails over my impotence, and His gentleness makes me great.

ALEXANDER SMELLIE.

God is Love

For me

I have my own church equally :
And in this church my faith sprang first.
In youth I looked to these very skies,
And, probing their immensities,
I found God there, His visible power :
Yet felt in my heart, amid all its sense
Of the power, an equal evidence
That His love there, too, was the nobler dower.
For the loving worm within its clod
Were diviner than a loveless god
Amid his worlds, I will dare to say.

Love which on earth, amid all the shows of it,
Has ever been seen the sole good of life in it,
The love ever growing there, spite of the strife in it,
Shall arise, made perfect, from death's repose of it.
And I shall behold Thee, face to face,
O God, and in Thy light retrace
How in all I loved here, still wast Thou !
Whom passing to them, as I fain would now,
I shall find as able to satiate
The love, Thy Gift, as my spirit's wonder
Thou art able to quicken and sublimiate,
With this sky of Thine that I now walk under,
And glory in Thee for, as I gaze
Thus, thus ! Oh, let men keep their ways
Of seeking Thee in a narrow shrine—
Be this my way ? And this is mine.

ROBERT BROWNING.

"*The King of Love my Shepherd is*"

SCRIPTURE READING: Psalm xxiii

Shepherd He is in the morning hours, leading me forth to the duties and temptations of the day, and Himself going before me. As I gird and prepare myself for the activities and the thousand perils of my life, I would be sure that He is with me. I dare not journey on to them alone. For apart from Him I can do nothing.

Shepherd in the hot noonday too, when the sun is beating fiercely down. He conducts me then to green pastures and along the banks of the waters of quietness. As I ply my daily task with busy feet, I often would come aside to be with Him, to ponder His Word, and to listen to the restoring whisper of His Spirit. It is the secret of abiding and prevailing peace.

And Shepherd when the night falls, and it is growing dark. I recall Sir Noel Paton's picture of *Lux in Tenebris*, the girl who walks through the Valley of the Shadow with her hand clasped in Christ's hand. Trust is conquering terror on her face, and she grows confident that no enemy will vanquish her. So may it be with me, what time I enter the narrow ravine and breast the chilling floods.

The King of Love my Shepherd is. Can I say it: this *my*, this pronoun of *possession*? If I can, humbly and heartily, then assuredly in life and death and eternity I shall not want. For I am persuaded that nothing can separate me from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus my Lord. His shepherdhood is no transient endowment, no generous impulse, no passing mood; it is from everlasting to everlasting.

ALEXANDER SMELLIE.

The Shepherd-Lord

Each morning breaks in glory,
Each evening ends in song,
Since Christ, the Lord, hath led me,
My Shepherd, wise and strong ;
His wisdom plans my pathway,
His strength supplies all need ;
For every day is His day,
And life is life indeed.

For rest, for food, for shelter,
His love doth aye provide ;
Fresh pastures, quiet waters,
Are mine, while by His side :
His grace, my soul restoring,
Each day is found the same ;
In ways of right He guides me,
Because of His great name.

The vale of death's dark shadow
To me no ill can bring ;
Thou, Shepherd-Lord, art with me,
So in the dark I sing :
" Thy rod and staff, my comfort ;
Thy love, my theme of praise ;
Thy presence, my protection ;
Thyself, my King always."

When evil foes surround me,
And threaten to molest,
E'en then, in grace most wondrous,
Thou makest me Thy guest :
Thy goodness and Thy mercy
Shall always follow me ;
And I will dwell for ever,
O Shepherd-Lord, with Thee.

CAREY BONNER

God Passing By

SCRIPTURE READING: Exodus xxxiii. 12-23

No better prayer can be conceived than that of Moses: *I beseech Thee, show me Thy glory.*

It is the prayer of the God-possessed soul. It means that, in my petitions, I have ceased to crave first and chiefly my own advantages, that the Lord fills my horizon and occupies my thought and warms my heart, that to know Him and to be admitted to His secret is the fountain-light of all my day, the master-light of all my seeing. I would be lifted in supplication to those altitudes.

It is the prayer of the unsatisfied soul. Who understood God, in that ancient time, more adequately and abundantly than Moses? Already he had been for years in His school. Already he was accustomed to talk with Him face to face. Yet he feels that he is merely at the beginning of an endless progress, and he covets larger things. Oh to discern these vistas upon vistas in God! Oh to press always to the mark!

It is the prayer of the prevailing soul. God yields to such entreaties; He grants such requests. He places Moses in a cleft of the rock, and passes by, and reveals in part and measure His dazzling glory. And if my ruling passion is to behold Him and to be drawn near Him, He has a nobler response for me than for Moses. I see not His back, but His face in Jesus Christ.

It is the prayer of the loving soul. Not for his own satisfaction merely did Moses wish the vision of God, but that he might be better qualified to reflect Him to the people and to win them to Him. Let this be the end which I set before me in my pleading. Bless me, my Father, that I may bless others. Lift on me Thy countenance, that I may illustrate and commend Thee to them.

ALEXANDER SMELLIE.

"Show me Thy Glory"

Eternal Mover, whose diffusèd glory,

To show our grovelling reason what Thou art,
Unfolds itself in clouds of nature's story,

Where man, Thy proudest creature, acts his part,
Whom yet, alas, I know not why, we call
The world's contracted sum, the little all ;

For what are we but lumps of walking clay ?

Why should we swell ? whence should our spirits rise ?
Are not brute beasts as strong, and birds as gay,—

Trees longer-lived, and creeping things as wise ?
Only our souls were left an inward light,
To feel our weakness, and confess Thy might.

Thou then, our strength, Father of life and death,
To whom our thanks, our vows, ourselves we owe,
From me, Thy tenant of this fading breath,

Accept those lines which from Thy goodness flow,
And Thou, that wert Thy regal prophet's muse,
Do not Thy praise in weaker strains refuse !

Let these poor notes ascend unto Thy throne,

Where majesty doth sit with mercy crowned,
Where my Redeemer lives, in whom alone

The errors of my wandering life are drowned :
Where all the choir of heaven resound the same,
That only Thine, Thine is the saving name !

SIR HENRY WOTTON (1568-1639).

Reminders of God's Presence

SCRIPTURE READING: Psalm cxlvii. 7 to 20

If we were hungering after God every raven's morning-call would have a lesson for us ; if we were desiring God's righteousness, every flower would be a Sermon on the Mount, pointing us to the well-clothed lilies.

If we were seeking a better country every bird of passage's flight would be full of meaning. If we were more sensitive of God's law, dead stones, dead trees, felled logs, even worms of the dust would speak lessons of judgment to us.

If we were trying to follow Jesus a flock of sheep could hardly pass us on the road and not leave a lesson.

If we were bent on studying our own hearts these red dawns and sunsets would not always fade, and we be as ignorant of our soul's sky as ever.

R. W. BARBOUR.

The Secret Place of the Most High

The Lord is in His Holy Place
In all things near and far !
Shekinah of the snowflake, He,
And Glory of the star,
And Secret of the April land
That stirs the field to flowers,
Whose little tabernacles rise
To hold Him through the hours.

He hides Himself within the love
Of those whom we love best ;
The smiles and tones that make our homes
Are shrines by Him possessed ;
He tents within the lonely heart
And shepherds every thought ;
We find Him not by seeking long,—
We lose Him not, unsought.

Our art may build its Holy Place,
Our feet on Sinai stand,
But Holiest of Holies knows
No tread, no touch of hand ;
The listening soul makes Sinai still
Wherever we may be,
And in the vow, " Thy will be done ! "
Lies all Gethsemane.

W. C. GANNETT.

“*Thy Presence*”

SCRIPTURE READING: Psalm cxxxix. 1 to 12

The fruit of true prayer consists not in enjoying the light, nor in having knowledge of spiritual things, since these may be found in a speculative intellect, without true virtue and perfection.

It only consists in *enduring* with patience, and persevering in faith and silence, believing that thou art in the Lord's presence, turning to Him thy heart with tranquillity and purity of mind.

So, whilst thou perseverest in this manner, thou wilt have the only preparation and disposition which at that time is necessary, and reap infinite fruit. . . .

Proceed, persevere, pray, and hold thy peace, for where thou findest not a sentiment thou wilt find a door, whereby thou mayest enter into thine own nothingness, knowing thyself to be nothing, that thou canst do nothing, nay, and that thou hast not so much as a good thought. . . .

Know that to fix the will on God, restraining thoughts and temptations, with the greatest tranquillity possible, is the highest pitch of praying.

MIGUEL MOLINOS.

The Presence

I sit within my room, and joy to find
That Thou, who always lov'st, art with me here ;
That I am never left by Thee behind,
But by Thyself Thou keep'st me ever near.
The fire burns brighter when with Thee I look,
And seems a kinder servant sent to me ;
With gladder heart I read Thy holy book,
Because Thou art the eyes by which I see ;
This aged chair, that table, watch, and door
Around in ready service ever wait ;
Nor can I ask of Thee a menial more
To fill the measure of my large estate,
For Thou Thyself, with all a Father's care,
Where'er I turn, art ever with me there.

JONES VERY.

The Indwelling God

SCRIPTURE READING: Isaiah lvii. 15, and John xiv. 18 to 24

The rebellious would have, could have, no hope of ever dwelling with the Lord God, if He did not first dwell in them. And this is the mystery of "God manifest in the flesh," that He is come to dwell with sinners, to be *their* God, and to make *them* His people. What but the indwelling of the Holy One could regenerate fallen souls and make them meet to ascend into the Hill of the Lord?

Oh what a Divine reality of a Gospel there is for all rebels! God hath touched them. God hath made reconciliation for their iniquity, and brought everlasting righteousness *into their nature*. God, through the Man Christ Jesus, descendeth into the rebel's heart, to fight for him against all his sins and tempters. Sin is stronger than man, but God is stronger than sin.

I ask my dear, fallen fellow-creature this only: Do you will that your spirit should be a dwelling-place for Jehovah-Jesus, your Lord and Saviour? It *is* His will to come into you, that He may make a new creature of you. If it be your will, the covenant is complete, and no power can break it. Christ in you will be your spirit of true Repentance, true Faith, true Hope, true Love, your spirit of Obedience, your Peace, and your whole Salvation.

JOHN PULSFORD.

A Basque Peasant returning from Church

O little lark, you need not fly
To seek your Master in the sky,
He treads our native sod ;
Why should you sing aloft, apart ?
Sing to the heaven of my heart :
In me, in me, in me is God !

O strangers passing in your car,
You pity me who come so far
On dusty feet, ill shod ;
You cannot guess, you cannot know
Upon what wings of joy I go
Who travel home with God.

From far-off lands they bring your fare,
Earth's choicest morsels are your share,
And prize of gun and rod ;
At richer boards I take my seat,
Have dainties angels may not eat :
In me, in me, in me is God !

O little lark, sing loud and long
To Him Who gave you flight and song
And me a heart aflame.
He loveth them of low degree,
And He hath magnified me
And holy, holy, holy is His Name !

ANNA BUNSTON
(MRS. DE BARY).

A Present God

Smile, O my God, on me,
Thy presence let me feel ;
My soul Thy glory longs to see,
Thyself in me reveal.

I would not wait for heaven ;
Heaven may begin below ;
To every new-born soul 'tis given
A present God to know.

The vision of Thy face
Fresh life and joy inspires,
While o'er my spirit flows the grace
That kindles all her fires.

Though on my saddened heart
The gloom of night should lie,
Faith shall not fail, nor hope depart.
If I but feel Thee nigh.

When earth's fleet years are past,
And I no more shall roam,
Give me, my God, to find at last
With Thee my changeless home.

RAY PALMER.

JESUS CHRIST: FRIEND OF MAN

Christ sits by Every Well

No need of guide and torch
To lead the questing soul :
We pass Christ in the porch
To seek Him at the pole.

FREDERICK LANGBRIDGE.

"Come unto Me"

We have no tears Thou wilt not dry ;
We have no wounds Thou wilt not heal ;
No sorrows pierce our human hearts
That Thou, dear Saviour, dost not feel.

Thy pity, like the dew, distils ;
And Thy compassion, like the light,
Our every morning overfills,
And crowns with stars our every night.

Let not the world's rude conflict drown
The charmed music of Thy voice,
That calls the weary ones to rest
And bids all mourning souls rejoice.

H. M. KIMBALL.

Thou lovest still the poor ; oh, blest
In poverty beloved to be !
Less lowly is my choice confess'd,
I love the rich in loving Thee !

My spirit bare before Thee stands.
I bring no gift, I ask no sign,
I come to Thee with empty hands,
The surer to be filled from Thine.

DORA GREENWELL.

The Nazareth Years

SCRIPTURE READING: Luke ii. 39 to 52;
cf. John ii. 11

Our subject to-day is the glory of the Divine Son. In this miracle "He manifested forth His glory." Concerning that glory we say:

The glory of Christ did not *begin* with that miracle: the miracle only *manifested* it.

For thirty years the wonder-working power had been in Him. It was not diviner power when it broke forth into visible manifestation than it had been when it was unsuspected and unseen. It had been exercised up to this time in common acts of youthful life: obedience to His mother, love to His brethren.

Well, it was just as divine in those simple, daily acts as when it showed itself in a way startling and wonderful. It was just as much the life of God on earth when He did an act of ordinary human love or human duty as when He did an extraordinary act, such as turning water into wine. God was as much, nay more, in the daily life and love of Christ than He was in Christ's miracles. The miracle only made the hidden glory visible. The extraordinary only proved that the ordinary was divine. That was the very object of the miracle. It was done to *manifest forth* his glory.

FREDERICK W. ROBERTSON.

The Carpenter of Nazareth

In Nazareth, the narrow road,
That tires the feet and steals the breath,
Passes the place where once abode
The Carpenter of Nazareth.

And up and down the dusty way
The village folk would often wend ;
And on the bench, beside Him, lay
Their broken things for Him to mend.

The maiden with the doll she broke,
The woman with the broken chair,
The man with broken plough, or yoke,
Said, " Can You mend it, Carpenter ? "

And each received the thing he sought,
In yoke, or plough, or chair, or doll ;
The broken thing which each had brought
Returned again a perfect whole.

So, up the hill the long years through,
With heavy step and wistful eye,
The burdened souls their way pursue,
Uttering each the plaintive cry :

" O Carpenter of Nazareth,
This heart, that's broken past repair,
This life, that's shattered nigh to death,
Oh, can You mend them, Carpenter ? "

And by His kind and ready hand,
His own sweet life is woven through
Our broken lives, until they stand
A New Creation—" all things new."

" The shattered idols of my heart,
Desire, ambition, hope, and faith,
Mould Thou into the perfect part,
O Carpenter of Nazareth ! "

GEORGE BLAIR.

The Nazarene

SCRIPTURE READING : Matt. ii. 19 to 23

Here He "dwelt" for five-and-twenty years. Here He went to school—education being universal and compulsory in Israel. Here He played. Here He learnt and followed His trade of carpenter. Here, probably, Joseph died, leaving Mary well protected in the affection of her Son.

Mark how many things you might have expected are absent. There is no college of angels to instruct Him; no little sovereignty given Him in which to learn command. He has four great educators—a *Home*; a *Trade*; *Poverty*; and *Time to Think*.

He learned to love mankind by looking on His mother, on Joseph, on His brethren. Their goodness taught Him faith in man and God alike. Work developed His powers. Poverty (not extreme, for there was little of our destitution in Palestine, and least of all in Galilee) taught Him "not to be ministered unto, but to minister." And *Time* allowed Him to ask His questions, till Bible and birds, flowers and souls, revealed their secrets.

Murmur not at obscurity and the necessity of toil; God chose them for His Son. One may learn in a village what mankind will eagerly listen to. "If thou wouldst be divine," says some one, "thou must live hidden like God."

RICHARD GLOVER.

"Is not this the Carpenter's Son?"

O Son of Man, who art divine,
A consecrating power we ask;
Make sacred every homely task,
And be each day a day of Thine.

Restful our Sabbaths are, for then
The stress and strain of business cease,
But, Master, let Thy sacred peace
Rest on the busy hours of men.

The heartfelt prayer, the tuneful breath,
To Thee in grateful worship rise,
But make our life a sacrifice
Like to Thine own at Nazareth.

Hallowed be all our mortal powers,
That all our life may sacred be:
O make us holy, Lord, like Thee,
And be Thy constant service ours.

Grant that no duty we may shun,
Nor any needful labour shirk:
But, like our Master, do our work,
And share the service of the Son.

Thus may we tread the path He trod,
And learn our Father's will to know,
That we, like Him, may daily grow
In favour both with man and God.

C. SILVESTER HORNE.

Hallowed Toil

SCRIPTURE READING: John v. 17, ix. 4, and Colossians iii. 17 to 24

The question is not whether men shall work, but how they shall work to a purpose, i.e. work rightly.

Here the voice of Christ speaks, and speaks unmistakably. It says, To work rightly, to work effectually, you must work *from God*—consciously, faithfully, piously *from God*.

His Christ must be your leader; His Spirit your law; His Will your motive. Not as out of yourself alone, but out of Him, must your power come. And faith is the feeling that confesses it; prayer is the hand that draws it down.

He Who knew all that is in man testifies this again and again. It was to convince us of it that He came into the world. If we are Christians, we shall hold that no work is done well that is not done religiously.

No life is truly lived that is not lived in the spirit of him who arose in the Temple and answered the heavenly summons with his reverent "*Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth.*" For he seems like only a prophecy of that other child born later for a yet diviner ministry, who also spoke in the Temple, and said "*Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?*"

F. D. HUNTINGTON.

Hymn of Labour

Jesus, Thou divine Companion,
By Thy lowly human birth
Thou hast come to join the workers,
Burden-bearers of the earth.
Thou, the Carpenter of Naz'reth,
Toiling for Thy daily food,
By Thy patience and Thy courage
Thou hast taught us toil is good.

They who tread the path of labour
Follow where Thy feet have trod ;
They who work without complaining
Do the holy will of God.
Thou, the peace that passeth knowledge,
Dwellest in the daily strife ;
Thou, the Bread of heaven, art broken
In the sacrament of life.

Every task, however simple,
Sets the soul that does it free ;
Every deed of love and kindness
Done to man is done to Thee.
Jesus, Thou divine Companion,
Help us all to work our best ;
Bless us in our daily labour,
Lead us to our Sabbath rest.

HENRY VAN DYKE.

“Even the Wind and the Sea obey Him”

SCRIPTURE READING: Mark iv. 35 to 41

Jesus found His most loyal companions at the pier-head and on the quay. They were children of the storm, sons of the tempest, if we may imitate the “Boanerges” title. And Jesus their Master was not just a master of men who were putting to sea by themselves at His bidding. He Himself had embarked on the tossing waves with them; nay, more than once He had disputed with the weather their ownership and security.

We are studying a group of weather-beaten men, and an equally weather-beaten Pilot. No fair-weather Christ to-day, and no fair-weather disciples. “Blow wind, come wrack!”

In a New Testament which I once possessed the printed head-line of the narrative was, “Christ and His disciples in a storm”—which I promptly amended and made it read, “Christ in a calm, and His disciples in a storm.” That slight change turned the story into a summary of the Gospel.

Actually, they were all together in a storm; and in the event they were all in a calm, for the peace of God which passes understanding, even on the lake, had filled their hearts. But from first to last Christ kept His own tranquillity.

J. RENDEL HARRIS.

My Pilot

I have a Pilot, and He sails
The rough and roaring sea with me ;
That He should guide my bark so mean
Has been 'Life's sweetest mystery.

My Pilot has five red, red wounds
He in His love received for me ;
Wounds in His hands, His feet, His side,
While thorn-prints in His brow I see.

When storm-winds from the sullen sky
Across the ocean loud have roared,
My soul has had such restful calm
Because my Pilot was on board.

When in the lonely, awful dark
I heard the breakers threaten wreck,
O music sweet !—I caught His step !
And knew my Pilot walked the deck.

And when Life's sea at last is crossed,
My bark in harbour safe shall be ;
His be the crown and mine the song,
My Saviour sailed the sea with me.

EDWARD AUGUSTUS RAND.

When all is sad without, within,
And I am plagued with doubt and sin,
Yet have I comfort, and rejoice
If I can hear the Master's voice.

~ Come unto Me, thou child distressed ;
Come, find a refuge on My breast ;
Lay down thy burden, and have rest.

When clouds are thick, and winds are loud,
And angry waters rising fast,
With many leaping waves that crowd
To overwhelm my boat at last ;
When all my chance of life seems lost,
Though far astray and tempest-tossed,
Yet have I courage, and rejoice
If I can hear the Master's voice.

Be not afraid ; 'tis I that stand,
In every danger, near at hand.
The winds are still at My command.

When earthly voices, once so dear,
Have died in silence, one by one,
Till I am left to mourn them here
With empty heart, and all alone ;
When sorrow from the gates of death
Breathes on my cheek her icy breath ;
Yet have I peace, and can rejoice
If I but hear the Master's voice.

A little while ; wait patiently.
A little while, and thou shalt be
With thy beloved, and with Me.

HENRY VAN DYKE.

No Words like these Words

Heart-broken and weary, where'er thou may'st be,
There are no words like these words for comforting thee,
When sorrows come round thee like waves of the sea,
The Saviour says cheerfully, "Come unto Me."

There are no words like these words, "Come hither and rest,"
Afflicted, forsaken, the thorn in thy breast,
All lonely and helpless, He thought upon thee,
And He said in His tenderness, "Come unto Me."

O Saviour, my spirit would fain be at rest :
There are passions which rage like a storm in my breast :
O ! show me the road along which I must flee,
And strengthen me, Saviour, to come unto Thee.

There are no words like these words : how blessèd they be !
How calming when Jesus says, "Come unto Me."
O ! hear them, my heart, they were spoken to thee,
And still they are calling thee—"Come unto Me."

I will walk through the world with these words on my heart ;
Through sorrow or sin they shall never depart ;
And when dying I hope He will whisper to me,
"I have loved thee, and saved thee ; come, sinner, to Me."

EDWIN PAXTON HOOD.

Hush

O Love of God that broodest deep,
And givest Thy belovèd sleep,
Hush Thou our heart when wild winds sweep ;
 Bid us be still.

Bid us be still, and let us know
That Thou art God when tempests blow ;
That to Thy sea all waters flow
 When troubled still.

And if the flood the mountain shakes,
And if the light our soul forsakes,
Let us be sure Thy love awakes
 To watch us still.

If battle-strife is in the land,
Grant us to see and understand
Thy large calm look of chief command,
 And so be still.

Until Thou makest wars to cease,
Until Thou bringest us release,
O say to us, dear Master, " Peace,
 Be still, be still ! "

FREDK. A. JACKSON.

JESUS CHRIST : REVEALER OF GOD

Our Master

Deep strike Thy roots, O heavenly Vine,
Within our earthly sod,
Most human and yet most Divine,
The flower of man and God !

O Love ! O Life ! Our faith and sight
Thy presence maketh one,
As through transfigured clouds of white
We trace the noonday sun.

So, to our mortal eyes subdued,
Flesh-veiled, but not concealed,
We know in Thee the fatherhood
And heart of God revealed.

JOHN G. WHITTIER.

Thou art the Everlasting Word,
The Father's only Son ;
God manifestly seen and heard,
And heaven's beloved One ;
Worthy, O Lamb of God, art Thou,
That every knee to Thee should bow.

True image of the infinite,
Whose essence is concealed :
Brightness of uncreated light ;
The heart of God revealed :
Worthy, O Lamb of God, art Thou,
That every knee to Thee should bow.

JOSIAH CONDER.

"In Christ Jesus"

In Christ I feel the heart of God
Throbbing from heaven through earth ;
Life stirs again within the clod,
Renewed in beauteous birth ;
The soul springs up, a flower of prayer,
Breathing His breath out on the air.

In Christ I touch the hand of God,
From His pure height reached down,
By blessed ways before untrod,
To lift us to our crown ;
Vict'ry that only perfect is
Through loving sacrifice, like His.

Holding His hand, my steadied feet
May walk the air, the seas ;
On life and death His smile falls sweet,
Lights up all mysteries ;
Stranger nor exile can I be
In new worlds where He leadeth me.

Not my Christ only ; He is ours :
Humanity's close bond ;
Key to its vast, unopened powers,
Dream of our dreams beyond.
What yet we shall be none can tell :
Now are we His, and all is well.

LUCY LARCOM.

Christ's Life reveals God's Love

SCRIPTURE READING : Ephesians iii. 14 to '19

At every step of Christ's life He let loose another secret of God's love. All God's love is in Christ. Think of every act, every event, every incident from His cradle to His grave, and you will find the Father's love stealing out somewhere.

In that endless round of good doing, see the *length* of it; in the sorrows of Gethsemane, see the *depths* of it; in the glories of the Mount of Transfiguration, see the *height* of it.

Think of Jesus' life as one incessant, unrestrained, fathomless, and trackless measuring out of God's love to men, telling it out long, broad, deep, and high.

R. W. BARBOUR.

The teachings of Jesus are not wholly found in His spoken words. His deeds were vocal with spiritual significance. The miracles were more than marvellous acts. They have no meaning except as "signs" of the eternal.

Do you think of our Lord simply as a worker of wonders? Then, you entirely fail to understand Him. Is it unthinkable to you that He healed diseased bodies? Read the "sign" of each act. Set Him a harder task.

"If Thou art Christ, see here this heart of mine,
Torn, empty, moaning, and unblessed!
Had ever heart more need of Thine,
If Thou, indeed, had rest?"

Thy word, Thy hand, right soon did scare the bane
That in their bodies death did breed;
If Thou canst cure my deeper pain,
Then art Thou Lord indeed!"

Was it superhuman for Him in ancient days to make whole a broken body? Then you must confess it Godlike that, to-day, He is still healing the broken in heart and binding up their wounds.

We understand Him only when we look upon Him as the interpreter of God to man.

Image of the Invisible

From doubt and all its sullen pain,
From every wide, uncertain quest,
My mind, O Christ, comes back again,
In Thee, the Word of God, to rest.

My laden conscience knows Thy voice,
In Thee my reasonings end their strife,
Thou strangely dost my heart rejoice ;
Where else is Way or Truth or Life ?

My Hope ! in whom all fullness dwells,
Thy words those many mansions show
Where love shall find what faith foretells
Thou would'st have told were it not so !

Thou can'st not disappoint the trust
That seeks its answers all in Thee ;
Because Thou wert the holy, just
And good—and must for ever be.

Head over all things to Thy church,
Messiah, Mediator, King !
In Whom we cease our utmost search,
Unquestioned and unquestioning ;

Because we do in God believe
We also do believe in Thee
And all Thine own would Thee receive,
Our Life and Light eternally.

O blessèd and enduring Rock,
Who builds on Thee shall never fall !
O Shepherd of one only flock,
Beyond all fear enfold us all !

M. WOOLSEY STRYKER.

"God so loved"

SCRIPTURE READING: John iii. 9 to 21

Salvation has a matchless origin. God so loved. It has its birth in heaven and not on earth, in the Lord of all and not in man or angel; and therefore it is more than commensurate with my desperate need. Moreover, it has its birth not in God's strict and inexorable righteousness, but in His unprecedented love; and, therefore, it is not alienated by my scarlet iniquity.

Salvation brings an unspeakable treasure. *He gave His only Begotten Son.* He did not surrender for me one of His bright worlds rolling through space, nor one of the cherubim who know or seraphim who burn: these had been insufficient to reveal His heart and to end my necessity. Nay, He sends to me His Equal and His Delight, Jesus, Who Himself is God as the Father is. More He cannot bestow.

Salvation makes a wide and winning appeal. It is for the world, east and west and north and south. *Whosoever*, that is its chosen word, a word which includes me and every sinful soul that will hearken to it. *Believeth*—it asks nothing more recondite, nothing more arduous. Only the assent of the mind and the consent of the will. Only my Yes to Christ.

Salvation promises a peerless boon. First, it is negative: *Shall not perish*, there is its assurance; no banishment, no penalty, no second death. But, next, it is positive: *but have everlasting life.* Life that begins here in a reconciled God, a new created heart, a transfigured personality; and that is perfected hereafter, in the heaven of heavens. O life that is life indeed!

Now, let my own heart and tongue thank God for His salvation.

ALEXANDER SMELLIE.

"O Love, I give myself to Thee"

O Love, who formedst me to wear
The image of Thy Godhead here ;
Who soughtest me with tender care
Through all my wanderings wild and drear ;
O Love, I give myself to Thee,
Thine ever, only Thine to be.

O Love, who once in time wast slain,
Pierced through and through with bitter woe ;
O Love, who wrestling thus didst gain
That we eternal joy might know ;
O Love, I give myself to Thee,
Thine ever, only Thine to be.

O Love, of whom is truth and light,
The Word and Spirit, life and power,
Whose heart was bared to them that smite,
To shield us in our trial hour ;
O Love, I give myself to Thee,
Thine ever, only Thine to be.

O Love, who thus hast bound me fast,
Beneath that gentle yoke of Thine ;
Love who hast conquered me at last,
And rapt away this heart of mine ;
O Love, I give myself to Thee,
Thine ever, only Thine to be.

O Love, who soon shalt bid me rise
From out this dying life of ours ;
O Love, who once above yon skies
Shall set me in the fadeless bowers ;
O Love, I give myself to Thee,
Thine ever, only Thine to be.

JOHANNES SCHEFFLER, tr. C. WINKWORTH.

"I have given you an Example"

SCRIPTURE READING: John xiii. 11 to 17

When you have enrolled yourself in the ranks of the Church of Christ it means more than mere empty form or ritual—it means that you are going to serve Him. You can serve Him,—you can further His glory where you are.

You can make your counter a place of truth. You can show a life set in honour, and girt about with peace, at the bench where you work, in the garret where you starve, in the field where you toil, in the streets through which you move; in every detail of your life you can have the glory of the praise of God—the service of a true heart contented with His will.

Do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly in the light of the example of Christ—that is the way to the realisation of God's glory in serving Him.

L. MACLEAN WATT.

(From "The Communion Table.")

Revelation by Working

Lord, I stand amid the night
Dark, dark and dreary,
Straining forth to catch the light
Eyes with watching weary.
Not a star is in the sky,
Black, void and lonely,
And I look for help on high
Up to shadows only.

Comes a voice from out the night,
Clear, clear and telling—
" 'Tis not from the gate of sight
Thou can'st find my dwelling;
Only in thy power to tread
Places rude and formless
Can'st thou see the glory spread
O'er love's ocean stormless.

“ Would’st thou see the skies aglow ?
Work, work untiring ;
Do the will, and thou shalt know
Doctrines soul-inspiring ;
Do the will through fire and flood,
On life’s claims attendant,
And in price of Calvary’s blood
Heaven shall shine resplendent.

“ Would’st thou see through gates ajar
Bright, bright God’s beauty ?
Wait not thou for sun nor star ;
Do thy present duty.
Duty’s path may thorny be,
Steep, steep her climbing,
But, upon her hill-top free,
Sabbath bells are chiming.

“ Jesus climbed a cross of pain,
Old, old the story,
Till the vale became a plain,
The plain a mountain’s glory ;
Up with footsteps undefiled.
Fresher, fresher feeling,
Till upon the ridge He smiled,
Life from death revealing.”

You and I shall climb with Him
Far, far and fearless,
Sure that on the mountain’s brim
Toiling shall be tearless,—
Sure that, walking in the will,
Firm, firm ’mid sorrow,
We shall reach the waters still
That mirror love’s to-morrow.

GEORGE MATHESON.

On the Hills with Christ

SCRIPTURE READING: Psalm xxiv

I think of various hills of the Lord, my Lord Jesus Christ. For instance, I cannot forget the hill of His temptation. "*The devil taketh Him up into an exceeding high mountain.*" I am glad that Jesus knew the wilderness, the darkness, the solicitation of Satan. It assures me that He sympathises with me in my hot battle. It tells me that I am not alone in the conflict. It certifies me that Christ is qualified to succour me.

Or I travel on to the hill of His transfiguration. "*Jesus taketh Peter, James and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart.*" I rejoice in the Gospel of the Transfiguration height. It publishes my Lord's heavenly glory, and, therefore, His sufficiency for all my need. He is able to pardon me; and He is able to transform me into His own beauty. He can, and He will.

And I turn to the hill of His crucifixion. "*When they were come unto a place called Golgotha, they crucified Him.*" It was shame for Him; it was new life for me. God's forgiveness of my guilt, His complete and changeless friendship, and evangelical repentance, and trustful faith, and the passion for holiness, and devotion to the service of Jesus—these are the fruits I gather on Calvary.

So, finally, I come to the hill of His ascension. "*He led them out to the Mount called Olivet, and He was carried up into heaven.*" Christ is on the throne. And why should I be a victim of despondency and fear? He must reign, until His enemies are the footstool of His feet. He is King of kings; and from Him cometh my help.

ALEXANDER SMELLIE.

The Holy Hill

Oh ! soul, if thou would'st climb the holy hill
And dwell with Jesus in the secret place,
Thou must set truth above men's blame or grace,
From the world's clamour keep thee very still.
Pure and inviolate thou must hold thy will,
Thy seen and unseen life keep equal pace,
For no deceit must mar thine honest face;
Thy word by ample deed thou must fulfil.

Behold how difficult and high a state
I would attain to ! O ! mine Advocate,
Thou God of life and Strengtheners of the weak,
Grant me this grace that when my spirit faints
The love I bear to all thy holy saints
May lift me up and onward to the peak !

DOROTHY FRANCES GURNEY.

Who buildest up our fleshly frame,
And dost that frame repair ;
Changing, yet keeping it the same,
With most mysterious care :

How can the mute unconscious bread
Become the speaking tongue ;
And nerves, through which our pleasures spread,
And which by pain are wrung ?

Can lifeless water help to form
The living, leaping blood,
Whose gentle flow, in passion's storm
Becomes a ruffled flood ?

How much I know yet know not how
The thing I know can be :
The Lord of mysteries art Thou —
Lord, I believe in Thee.

The powers of common blood and flesh
My spirit foul and grieve :
O Lord, create my spirit fresh,
Then these new health receive.

On Christ, the meat and drink divine,
I feed my thoughts and heart ;
At each repast some acts are mine,
But Thine the chiefest part.

Through Thee I stronger, better grow,
Old life for new exchange ;
Thy work divine by this I know —
It blends the plain and strange.

THOMAS T. LYNCH.

"To me to live is Christ"

SCRIPTURE READING: Ephesians iii. 13 to 21, and Galatians ii. 20

The soul needeth no other birth than a turning towards God, and an entering into Him.

Set, as it were, thy left-hand will to the daily calling thou pursuest, but direct thy right-hand will towards God and the Eternal; only remember that thou art but a day labourer, and listen for the voice that shall call thee home.

Faith is nothing less than a uniting of our will with God's will.

So long as the smallest spark in a human soul longeth for God and would be saved, so long is God's door of mercy open.

The soul is an eye into the abyss of the Eternal.

Why do we dispute any longer about knowledge? Knowledge in itself is not the way to blessedness. The devil knows more than we do, and what good does it do him? That I know much gives me little joy; but that I love my Saviour, Jesus Christ, and always long for Him, this giveth me joy—for *a longing for Him is a receiving of Him.*

. . . I give myself up to Thee with my whole heart, mind, and will. . . . I have no other road to Thee, but Thy suffering and death; as Thou hast turned our death into life by Thine Incarnation, and hast burst the chains of death, therefore I would place the desires of my soul in the open gates of Thy death.

JACOB BEHMEN.

God's Dwelling-place

The soul wherein God dwells,—
What church could holier be ?—
Becomes a walking tent
Of heavenly majesty.

How far from here to Heaven ?
Not very far, my friend ;
A single hearty step
Will all thy journey end.

Though Christ a thousand times
In Bethlehem be born
If He's not born in thee.
Thy soul is still forlorn.

The cross on Golgotha
Will never save thy soul,
The cross in thine own heart
Alone can make thee whole.

Hold there ! where runnest thou ?
Know Heaven is in thee.
Seek'st thou for God elsewhere
His face thou'lt never see.

O would thy heart but be
A manger for His birth ;
God would once more become
A child upon the earth.

Go out, God will go in,
Die thou and let Him live.
Be not—and He will be,
Wait and He'll all things give.

JOHANNES SCHEFFLER

God with Us

And art Thou come with us to dwell,
Our Prince, our Guide, our Love, our Lord,
And is Thy name Emmanuel,
God present with His world restored ?

The heart is glad for Thee ! it knows
None now shall bid it err or mourn
And o'er its desert breaks the rose
In triumph o'er the grieving thorn.

Thou bringest all again ; with Thee
Is light, is space, is breath, and room
For each thing fair, beloved, and free,
To have its hour of life and bloom.

Each heart's deep instinct unconfess'd ;
Each lowly wish, each daring claim ;
All, all that life hath long repress'd,
Unfolds, undreading blight or blame.

Thy reign eternal will not cease ;
Thy years are sure, and glad, and slow
Within Thy mighty world of peace
The humblest flower hath leave to blow.

The world is glad for Thee, the heart
Is glad for Thee ! and all is well,
And fixed and sure, because *Thou art*,
Whose name is called Emmanuel.

DORA GREENWELL.

JESUS CHRIST: SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD

O my Saviour, make me see,
How dearly Thou hast paid for me,
That, lost again, my life may prove,
As then in death, so now in love.

R. CRASHAW.

Through all depths of sin and loss
Drops the plummet of Thy Cross !
Never yet abyss was found
Deeper than that Cross could sound

JOHN G. WHITTIER.

In the cross of Christ excess in
man is met by excess in God ; excess
of evil is mastered by excess of love.

BOURDALOUE.

Thou who wast in all behaviour
Ever equal, free from sin,
Be to us a daily Saviour ;
Over secret evil win
Secret conquest :
Reign without, because within.

THOMAS T. LYNCH.

Christ Crucified

SCRIPTURE READING: Mark xv. 25 to 38

The Cross speaks of identification. Christ took my sickness and my sin on Himself. Christ felt them as if they were His own. He joined Himself with me, wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked. He laid my burden on His shoulder and on His soul. There was no partition wall, there was not so much as a dividing-line, which He allowed to remain between Him and me. He enrolled Himself in my defeated company. He experienced my pressure, my weight, my demerit, my death.

The Cross speaks of labour. There was resolution in it. There was the purposeful lifting of an incalculable load. There was difficulty. There was unprecedented toil. Christ carried rest and peace in His heart, while He was magnifying God's law and working out my salvation; but such an endeavour His was, such a task. Even for the Holy-Begotten Son it was not an easy thing to perfect my deliverance. I see Him travelling in the greatness of His strength, battling against insuperable obstacles, and prevailing by tears and blood.

Yes, prevailing. For the Cross speaks of triumph. Christ ended the incubus, the bondage, the curse. I remember Holman Hunt's painting of "The Scapegoat." Among the salt sands of the desert the sin-stricken, weary goat is dying. But it has fulfilled its errand. It has taken the transgressions of the people from them and from the sight of God. If it is a victim, it is a victor too. The picture is a suggestion of Jesus. He is the Scapegoat. He bears on Him all my iniquities into a land not inhabited. He sets me free. He dies; but He triumphs.

ALEXANDER SMELLIE.

The Mediator

How high Thou art ! our songs can own
No music Thou could'st stoop to hear !
But still the Son's expiring groan
Is vocal in the Father's ear.

How pure Thou art ! Our hands are dyed
With curses, red with murder's hue.
But He hath stretched His hands to hide
The sins that pierced them from Thy view.

How strong Thou art ! we tremble lest
The thunders of Thine arm be moved,
But He is lying on Thy breast,
And Thou must clasp Thy best beloved.

How kind Thou art ! Thou did'st not choose
To joy in Him for ever so ;
Thou that embrace Thou wilt not lose
For vengeance, did'st for love forego.

High God, and pure, and strong, and kind,
The low, the foul, the feeble, spare !
Thy brightness in His face we find,
Behold our darkness only there.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

The Message of the Cross

SCRIPTURE READING : I Corinthians i. 18 to 24 and Galatians
vi. 14

This is what the Incarnation is for : it is for the Atonement. This is emphatically the one thing Christ came into the world to do : to die.

No doubt He came to serve other worlds as well. He came to reveal the Father ; He came to restore the image in man ; He came to live the perfect life, to set the peerless example ; He came to found the highest, closest, widest brotherhood among mankind ; He came to wind up the tangled skein of this painful earth.

But none of these can it be said He came to do in the sense in which He came to die ; or, rather, these other subordinate ends were only accomplished by the fulfilment of the primary one.

How is the Father known ? Remove the Cross, and how are the God and man brought into harmony, reconciled ? Remove the Cross, and where is the goal at once and the grand starting-point to the Imitation of Christ ? Remove the Cross, and where is the very nerve and nexus of the new membership ? Remove the Cross, and where is the promise of perfected salvation ?

R. W. BARBOUR.

Hail, Blessèd Cross !

Hail, blessèd Cross ! how bold
Thou makest me ! how strong ! No more I weep
O'er giant cities now the dragon's fold,
O'er mighty empires breathed to dust away ;
No more a tearful chronicle I keep
Of all that passes ere our mortal day
Hath passed ; nor grieve that in earth's fruitful, deep,
Warm soil *my* life hath struck but tender hold :
All things must change, and into ruin, cold,
And darkness pass and perish ; yet, behold !
All fades not with the fading leaf. To me
The Lord hath showed a tree !
And many a leaf on me
Hath fallen from off this Tree
Of healing power ! I know
Not yet how near the skies
Its lofty stem will rise ;
Nor guess how deep below,
To what drear vaults of woe
Its roots will pierce : I see
Its boughs spread wide and free,
And fowls of every wing
Beneath them build and cling.
Hail, blessèd Cross ! I see
My life grow green in thee !
My life, that hidden, mute,
Lives ever in Thy root,
When life fails utterly ;
All hail, Thou blessèd Tree !

DORA GREENWELL.

Let the world call herself my foe,
Or let the world allure—
I care not for the world ; I go
To this dear friend and sure.
And when life's fiercest storms are sent,
Upon life's wildest sea,
My little bark is confident,
Because it holds by Thee.

When the law threatens endless death
Upon the dreadful hill,
Straightway from her consuming breath
My soul goeth higher still—
Goeth to Jesus, wounded, slain,
And maketh Him her home,
Whence she will not go out again,
And where death cannot come.

I do not fear the wilderness
Where Thou hast been before ;
Nay rather will I daily press
After Thee, near Thee, more !
Thou art my food ; on Thee I lean ;
Thou makest my heart sing ;
And to Thy heavenly pastures green
All Thy dear flock dost bring.

And if the gate that opens there
Be dark to other men,
It is not dark to those who share
The heart of Jesus then ;
That is not losing much of life
Which is not losing Thee,
Who art as present in the strife
As in the victory.

*From the German of DESSLER. Translated
by GREVILLE MATHESON.*

The Sin-Bearer

SCRIPTURE READING: 1 Peter ii. 19 to 25

A holy Sin-Bearer, He *did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth*. His speech was pure and gracious. His life was clear from soil or taint. So He is not hampered by disabilities of His own; and He is free to espouse my foiled and defeated cause.

A meek and gentle Sin-Bearer. When He *was reviled, He reviled not again*. Never was the loveliness of His humanity more apparent than when the blast of the terrible ones was as a storm against the wall. Even His enemies He prayed for; and, therefore, I believe that He has grace for me.

A solitary Sin-Bearer. *His Own Self*, He did all, endured all, suffered all. He trod the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with Him. He needs no priest to supplement His sufficient work, "His glorious infamy." And I have nothing to do but to trust in Him.

A vicarious Sin-Bearer. *Our Sins*, not His, He bare in His body upon the Tree. With my sentence He charged Himself. In my place condemned He stood. For me, and those like me, He was despised and rejected, derelict and forsaken. Behold, what manner of Love is His!

And a triumphant Sin-Bearer. *By Whose stripes ye were healed*, Peter says. There is infinite merit in the death of the God-Man. There are unfathomable mysteries of mercy in the transaction of Calvary. There is grace enough for thousands of new worlds as great as this.

So from the far country, from wretchedness and misery and poverty and blindness and nakedness, let me return to the Shepherd and Bishop of my soul.

ALEXANDER SMELLIE.

The Power of the Cross

SCRIPTURE READING: I Cor. i. 12 to 24

The Cross of Christ, said Paul, is the Power of God. What a paradox and what an impossibility it seemed to Jewish religiousness and to Greek wisdom ! But simple faith understands the mystery well.

The Cross shows me God clothing Himself with humility. He bends to the sharpest sorrow and the darkest shame. And whereas my proud spirit would only rebel against a King all majestic, all happy, all untouched by poverty and disgrace and grief, I am subdued and vanquished by One who comes to me in so lowly a guise. The Sufferer and Saviour triumphs where the Sovereign must have failed.

And the Cross shows me God meeting and discharging the demands of law. The Divine law, so holy, so good, hates my sin, and has righteously condemned me to die because of it. I cannot answer my accuser for one out of a thousand of my transgressions. But in my place the Lord, whose mouthpiece the law is, fulfils its commands and bears its penalty. This is all I need. This fetters me in glad bondage to my Redeemer.

And the Cross shows me God loving without measure or stint. Many waters cannot quench His love ; the floods cannot drown it. He knows from the beginning the bitter and dreadful end, the agony and the desolation ; and yet He cares for me so passionately and so prevailingly that He sets His face steadfastly towards this end. My heart of stone is melted thus, and I am led in willing captivity.

Manifestly the Cross is the very Power of the Most High God.

ALEXANDER SMELLIE.

"That Holy Cross"

SCRIPTURE READING: Matthew xxvi. 36 to 39; and Mark xv.
25 to 40

The freeness of the sacrifice was its efficacy. It was the way chosen from the beginning. God so loved the world. It was not the offering of the Father alone, nor of the Son alone, but of the Divine heart of God in them both—a heart that was loving before the foundation of the world, and finding this overwhelming utterance at last.

There, at Calvary, was set up the one immovable, unfailing, everlasting barrier against the tyranny and triumph of Evil. There the waves of hatred, oppression, envy, unbelief, scorn, sensuality, and every sin, break their force—dashing in vain, and dying away against that planted cross; for its living roots are wound by God into the centre and core of the world.

No wonder the sufferer was "amazed," as He went to the garden! No wonder, as the shining ones, prophets of the elder covenant, met Him on the Mount of Transfiguration, this was the theme of their high communion, and they spoke together of "the decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem." No wonder, as the hour drew on, sorrow and victory took their sway by turns in His feelings, for He was the Son of Mary as well as the Son of God. "Now," he said, "is the Son of Man glorified"; and then, with natural anguish, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death," and in the dear craving for human sympathy that brings him down from Tabor and Zion so near to us in our mortal Gethsemane, "Tarry ye here and watch with Me."

And just in the measure that the spirit of His sacrifice is in us shall we be praising Him that the path of His eager choice was the march to the Passover, to His Passion.

F. D. HUNTINGTON.

Rise, O my Soul

Rise, O my soul, with thy desires to Heaven,
And with divinest contemplation use
Thy time where time's eternity is given,
And let vain thoughts no more thy thoughts abuse ;
But down in midnight darkness let them lie :
So live thy better, let thy worse thoughts die.

And thou, my soul, inspired with holy flame,
View and review with most regardful eye
That holy cross, whence Thy salvation came,
On which thy Saviour and thy sin did die ;
For in that sacred object is much pleasure,
And in that Saviour is my life, my treasure.

To Thee, O Jesu, I direct mine eye;
To Thee my hands, to Thee my humble knees ;
To Thee my heart shall offer sacrifice,
To Thee my thoughts, Who my thoughts only sees.
To Thee my self, my self and all I give ;
To Thee I die, to Thee I only live.

SIR WALTER RALEIGH (1552-1618).

The Eternal Saviour

SCRIPTURE READING : John viii. 58, and xvii. 1 to 5, and 20 to 26

Christ says, "I am Eternal." Now, that must mean not merely that He has existed and shall exist for ever, but also that in the for evers of the past and the future He is eternally Christ ; that the special nature in which He relates Himself to us as Saviour never had a beginning and shall never have an end.

Now, what is that special nature ? Christ ! The word includes to our thought such a Divinity as involves the human element.

Christ is the divinely human, the humanly divine. It is the Deity endowed with a peculiar human sympathy, showing by a genuine brotherhood the experience of man.

That is to say, there are two words : God and Man. One describes pure deity, the other pure humanity. Christ is a word not identical with either, but including both.

It is the Deity in which the Humanity has part ; it is the Humanity in which the Deity resides. It is that special mediatorial nature which has its own double wearing of both, the ability to stand between and reconcile the separated manhood and divinity.

PHILLIPS BROOKS.

Hymn to our Saviour

Christ, Who art above the sky,
Teach me how to live and die !
Thou hast sent me here to be
Born of human kind like Thee :
Born to walk the flinty road
Which Thy crimson'd footsteps trode ;
Clear mine eyes to track them right,
Leading upwards to the light.

Pure as snow from taint of wrong,
Thou hast known temptation strong ;
Tried and burst the snares that lie
Set to lure us from the sky :
Thou wilt aid me firm to stand
When the tempter is at hand ;
Thou wilt draw my thoughts to Thee,
And the demon sin will flee.

When I slip, my frailty spare ;
Saviour, save me from despair !
By the mercy-gate Thou art,
Vision of the Bleeding Heart,
Gazing with thorn-circled face
Human-eyed on all the race :
If I kneel before the gate,
Thou wilt never cry " Too late ! "

If in vain my strength has toil'd ;
Hopes defeated ; purpose foil'd ;
If the light of life be dim,
Waning mind, and wither'd limb ;
If my dear ones leave me lone,
Be Thou here when all are gone ;
Thou hast known what anguish is,
Thou can'st turn my tears to bliss.

FRANCIS TURNER PALGRAVE.

No East or West

In Christ there is no East or West,
In Him no South or North,
But one great Fellowship of Love
Throughout the whole wide earth.

In Him shall true hearts everywhere
Their high communion find.
His service is the golden cord
Close binding all mankind.

Join hands then, Brothers of the Faith,
Whate'er your race may be !—
Who serves my Father as a son
Is surely kin to me.

In Christ now meet both East and West,
In Him meet South and North,
All Christly souls are one in Him,
Throughout the whole wide earth.

JOHN OXENHAM.

JESUS CHRIST: RISEN AND LIVING

Through God alone can man be strong ;
To comfort us He gave this song :

" In Jesus Christ we stand ;
Death held Him in his gloomy prison,
He broke the chains, and has arisen,
To rule the deathless land."

THOMAS T. LYNCH.

If in my heart's most secret shrine
My Lord abide,
Then all those human loves of mine
Whom there I hide
Shall feel His virtue flow to them.
Since there they touch His garment's hem.

DOROTHY FRANCES GURNEY.

Lord Christ, let me but hold Thy hand,
And all the rest may go.
For nothing is, but only seems,
And life is full of idle dreams,
Until Thyself we know.

The whole wide world is nought beside
The wonder of Thy love.
And though my state be mean and strait,
Give me but heart to work and wait,
And I have Treasure-Trove.

JOHN OXENHAM.

"He rose again"

SCRIPTURE READING: I Corinthians xv. 1 to 14

. . . Whatever may be your interpretation of Scripture as to the mode in which the Saviour's death works for our benefit in this department of its efficacy, you will find small comfort in, small profit from, it, unless, after you have said, "He was crucified," you can say, "He is risen."

A man drafted for some service involving death will have no profit from a substitute, unless that substitute has been accepted by authority.

A man sentenced by God's law to die for sin can have no profit from Christ's death for him unless that substitutionary death has been accepted; and there has been no such acceptance if Christ be not risen.

His rising, thus sanctioned by the seal of law and all the pomp of heaven, gave to His redeeming act the most public and solemn ratification.¹

CHARLES STANFORD.

¹ "Our justification and absolution are (ye see) rather ascribed to the resurrection of Christ than to His death; for that indeed His death was a ground of bestowing them; but His resurrection did accomplish the collation of them; . . . since, in a manner so notorious, God hath declared His favour to our proxy, what suspicion of displeasure can remain?"—ISAAC BARROW (1630-77).

"The Power of His Resurrection"

Jesus my Redeemer lives,
Christ my trust is dead no more ;
In the strength this knowledge gives
Shall not all my fears be o'er,
Though the night of death be fraught
Still with many an anxious thought ?

Jesus my Redeemer lives,
And His life I once shall see ;
Bright the hope this promise gives,
Where He is I too shall be.
Shall I fear then ? Can the Head
Rise and leave the members dead ?

Close to Him my soul is bound
In the bonds of Hope enclasp'd ;
Faith's strong hand this hold hath found,
And the Rock hath firmly grasp'd :
And no ban of death can part
From our Lord the trusting heart.

I shall see Him with these eyes,
Him whom I shall surely know ;
Not another shall I rise,
With His love this heart shall glow ;
Only there shall disappear
Weakness in and round me here.

LOUISA HENRIETTA,
Electress of Brandenburg (1653).

The Unseen Companion

SCRIPTURE READING: Luke xxiv. 13 to 35

It is true that often we are so self-absorbed in our own trials, so bowed beneath the burden of our own cross, that we do not feel that the world's Cross-bearer is walking up our Calvary by our side.

But let us not be deceived. God knows what sorrows we dwell with; and Christ tasted them all before us. He walks silently beside us many a time, even sometimes at a distance, but following; and when He sees that we are fit to bear the talking of it, He walks close to our heart and speaks to us.

L. MACLEAN WATT.

(From "The Communion Table.")

"Oh, leave us not . . ."

Lord Jesus, in the days of old,

Two walked with Thee in waning light;
And love's blind instinct made them bold

To crave Thy presence through the night.
As night descends, we too would pray:

"Oh, leave us not at close of day."

Did not their hearts within them burn ?
And, though their Lord they failed to know,
Did not their spirits inly yearn ?
They could not let the Stranger go.
Much more must we who know Thee pray :
" Oh, leave us not at close of day ! "

The hours of day are glad and good.
And good the gifts Thy hand bestows,—
The body's health, the spirit's food,
And rest, and after rest repose.
We would not lose day's golden gains,
So stay with us as daylight wanes.

Perchance we have not always wist
Who has been with us by the way ;
Amid day's uproar we have missed
Some word that Thou hast had to say.
In silent night, O Saviour dear,
We would not fail Thy voice to hear.

Day is far spent, and night is nigh,
Stay with us, Saviour, through the night ;
Talk with us, touch us tenderly,
Lead us to peace, to rest, to light ;
Dispel our darkness with Thy face,
Radiant with resurrection grace.

Nor this night only, blessed Lord,
We, every day and every hour,
Would walk with Thee Emmausward
To hear Thy voice of love and power ;
And every night would by Thy side
Look, listen, and be satisfied.

J. ASHCROFT NOBLE.

"*Lovest thou Me?*"

SCRIPTURE READING: John xxi. 15 to 19

Notice the personality of the question. It was personal to Peter, it is personal to you.

He deals with us one by one lovingly, each soul with a distinct love; asking each soul for a distinct response; to each He says, "*I know thy name*"; to each speaks personally, as to Adam, when He said, "*Adam, where art thou?*" Personally as to Abraham, when He cried, "*Abraham, Abraham, stay now thy hand!*" Personally as to Samuel, when in the hush of the night He said, "*Samuel, Samuel!*" personally as to Martha, when he said, "*Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things; but one thing is needful.*" Personally as to Saul of Tarsus, when He said, "*Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?*" Personally as to Simon, when He said, "*Simon, Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me?*"

English names are on His lips as well as Jewish names; answer to your name—it is spoken now—silently to the ear, audibly to the soul—" *Lovest thou Me?*"

CHARLES STANFORD.

The Question .

Lord, did'st Thou turn Thine eyes
On me, and speak upon this solemn shore
The words that wounded with a keen surprise
Thine erring, loving servant, grieved the more
That love, as doubtful of its own, should seek
To put it thrice to proof ; I could but speak
With Him ; I could but say, " Below, above,
Thou knowest all,—Thou knowest that I love."

Yet, Thou hast spoken, " Blessed are the meek."
And " they that mourn are blessed." I can touch
This border of Thy garment ; now I know
I love Thee, Lord, I will not let Thee go ;
I will not ask, " Are these beloved too much ? "
Too little, Lord ! because my heart is cold
In loving Thee ! I make with one of old
This fervent prayer : Do Thou enlarge my coast,
And o'er it rule Thyself ! where Thou art most
Beloved, is room for all ! the heart grows wide
That holdeth Thee ! a heaven where none doth press
Upon the other, none of more or less
Doth ask solicitous, for ever there
Is bread enough, and fullness still to spare,
And none that come depart unsatisfied."

DORA GREENWELL.

Christ the Fullness of Life

SCRIPTURE READING : Colossians ii. 6 to 15

Christ did not come to show us how a human existence can be moulded, and the world's evils be vanquished, by a resolute self-will. It is amazing with what a barren notion of "Christ, the example," some Christian readers have been satisfied ; as if the Son of God had stood apart from the vital seats of motive-power, the springs of love and faith in men, and only exhibited to the eye of admiration an external model of excellence, which His followers were to set themselves, with cool faculties, to copy.

The highest spiritual works are not accomplished in that way. Exemplary virtue is never the loftiest virtue. Imitation of any model, however high, is not the noblest action of the soul.

Influence, as the very etymology of the word might teach, is another thing from that. All our best helps are spiritual gifts or forces from soul to soul.

Christ came to be a divine personal influence in the world ; i.e. that in and through His Person the Divine life might veritably and literally *flow into* the breasts of mankind. He came not to tell us the manner of living, but to communicate, to pour in, upon all willing and receiving hearts, the power of living—the energy that acts itself spontaneously into holy thoughts and deeds.

F. D. HUNTINGTON.

“*Christ is All, and in All*”

SCRIPTURE READING: Colossians iii. 1 to 11

Christ is in all His redeemed, as the soul of their soul, the life of their life. He is the pitying heart and the helping hand of God with every needy, praying spirit in the world.

He is the living, secret, efficient Gospel and Word of God, that is gone forth through all the earth. He is the sweet light of the knowledge of God that breaks in upon every penitent heart. He is the invisible bond of unity between all the scattered members of His body. He is far above all heavens; He fills all things.

He is not only with those who believe in Him and love Him, but also with those who neither believe in Him nor love Him—to restrain them or to wound them, to enlighten them or to melt them, that He may be to them also *Jesus, their Saviour*.

“Say not in thy heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? that is, to bring Christ down.” The Christ of God is in thy heart, waiting and aiming to get the consent of thy will, that He may save thee.

JOHN PULSFORD.

Jesus, our Forerunner

There's not a hope with comfort fraught
Triumphant over death and time,
But Jesus mingles in the thought,
Forerunner of our course sublime.

His image meets me in the hour
Of joy, and brightens every smile ;
I see Him when the tempests lower,
Each terror soothe, each grief beguile.

I see Him in the daily round
Of social duty, mild and meek ;
With Him I tread the hallowed ground
Communion with my God to seek.

I see His pitying, gentle eye,
When lonely want appeals for aid ;
I hear Him in the frequent sigh
That mourns the waste which sin has made.

I meet Him at the lowly tomb ;
I weep where Jesus wept before ;
And there, above the grave's dark gloom,
I hear His voice, and weep no more.

EMILY TAYLOR.

"Children, have ye any Meat?"

SCRIPTURE READING: John xxi. 1 to 7

"Children," said He. The rough navigators were not used to this word of soft endearment, but their hearts burst into no flame of glad surprise; we might have expected this, for only Jesus would be likely thus to speak.

It was like Him to come after them when they would not go after Him, and to call them His children after all! "*Have ye any food?*" He asked. Wherever disciples toil the Lord looks on.

Let them call to mind that He who "decks the lily in its pride, and stills the clamour of the raven's nest," has taught His children the prayer, "*Give us this day our daily bread;*" and therefore is not likely to let them starve. In answer to this inquiry they only said, "No"; the short word of cross, aching, disappointed men.

Then said He, "*Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and ye shall find.*" It was the advice of One who is slow to take offence, and whose precept usually implies a promise; of One who for years had shared their lowly lodging and their simple fare, and who well knew their ways; of One whose infinite grandeur does not keep Him from interest in our commonest callings, and who, though "*the High and Lofty One;*" is willing to direct us in all our work, great or little.

CHARLES STANFORD.

Fishermen—Not of Galilee

They have toiled all the night, the long weary night,
They have toiled all the night, Lord, and taken nothing :—
The heavens are as brass, and all flesh seems as grass,
Death strikes with horror and life with loathing.

Walk'st Thou by the waters, the dark silent waters,
The fathomless waters that no line can plumb ?
Art Thou Redeemer, or a mere schemer—
Preaching a kingdom that cannot come ?

Not a word say'st Thou ; no wrath betray'st Thou ;
Scarcely delay'st Thou their terrors to lull ;
On the shore standing, mutely commanding,
“ Let down your nets ! ”—And they draw them up—full !

Jesus, Redeemer—only Redeemer !
I, a poor dreamer, lay hold upon Thee :
Thy will pursuing, though no end viewing,
But simply doing as Thou biddest me.

Though Thee I see not,—either light be not,
Or Thou wilt free not the scales from mine eyes,
I ne'er gainsay Thee, but only obey Thee ;
Obedience is better than sacrifice.

Though on my prison gleams no open vision,
Walking Elysian by Galilee's tide,
Unseen, I feel Thee, and death will reveal Thee :
I shall wake in Thy likeness, satisfied.

DINAH M. MULOCK (MRS. CRAIK).

"It is the Lord"

SCRIPTURE READING: John xxi. 7 to 14; cp. also Luke xxii. 28 to 30, and Revelation xix. 9

Did you ever notice how this whole incident might be turned, by a symbolical application, to the hour of death, and the vision which may meet us when we come thither?

The morning is dawning, the grey of night going away, the lake is still; and yonder, standing on the shore, in the uncertain light, there is one dim figure, and one disciple catches a sight of Him, and another casts himself into the water, and they find a fire of coals, and fish laid thereon, and bread, and Christ gathers them around His table, and they all know that "it is the Lord."

It is what the death of the Christian man, who has gone through life recognising Christ everywhere, may well become: the morning dawning, and the finished work, and the figure standing on the quiet beach, so that the last plunge into the cold flood that yet separates us will not be taken with trembling reluctance; but, drawn to Him by the love beaming out of His face, and upheld by the power of His beckoning presence, we shall struggle through the latest wave that parts us, and scarcely feel its chill, nor know that we *have* crossed it, till, falling at His feet, we see, undazzled by the near and clear vision of His face, that this is indeed heaven. And, looking back upon "the sea that brought us thither," we shall behold its waters flashing in the light of that everlasting morning, and hear them breaking into music upon the eternal shore.

And then, when all the weary night watchers on the stormy ocean of life are gathered together around Him Who watched with them from His throne on the bordering mountains of eternity, where the day breaks for ever—then He will seat them at His table in His kingdom, and none will need to ask, "Who art Thou?" or, "Where am I!" for all shall know that "it is the Lord," and the full, perfect, unchangeable vision of His blessed face will be heaven!

ALEXANDER MCLAREN.

By the Lake of Tiberias

All grey the dawn, and dim the morning light,
When weary fishers, toiling on the lake,
Saw One unknown, though on the shore in sight ;
Nor did His wondrous words their knowledge wake.
Then, watching love discerned the Christ adored,
And John the Seer said : "*It is the Lord !*"

So would I watch at break of ev'ry day,
With quiet heart, and with discerning love,
To crave the vision of His face, and pray :
"Reveal Thyself, O Christ ! lift me above
All blinding doubt ! that I, with glad accord,
May say with him of old : '*It is the Lord !*'"

Then, at the last, when death's dark night is o'er,
And on me dawns the day that hath no end,
Lo ! One shall greet me on th' eternal shore,—
The King of life, my Saviour, and my Friend,—
And faith, with insight clear, shall speak the word
Of joy and peace untold : "*It is the Lord !*"

CAREY BONNER.

WHILE I LIVE, I PRAY

I know a little, land-locked bay
For souls upon a stormy sea ;
What light on all the hills around,
What song of birds in every tree !

No billows roll, no rocks do rend,
No wildly wrecking winds are there ;
But tiny ripples whisper " Peace ! "
That little land-locked bay is Prayer.

EDWARD AUGUSTUS RAND.

Prayer was not meant for luxury,
Or selfish pastime sweet ;
It is the prostrate creature's place
At his Creator's feet.

F. W. FABER.

Grant us to keep at least a prompt desire,
Continual readiness for prayer and praise,
An altar heaped and waiting to take fire
With the least spark, and leap into a blaze.

R. C. TRENCH.

Lord ! who art merciful as well as just,
Incline Thine ear to me, a child of dust !
Not what I would, O Lord, I offer Thee,
Alas ! but what I can.

Father Almighty, who hast made me man,
And bade me look to Heav'n, for Thou art there,

Accept my sacrifice and humble prayer ;
Four things which are not in Thy treasury,
I lay before Thee, Lord, with this petition—
My nothingness, my wants, my sin, and my contrition.

ROBERT SOUTHEY (*from the Persian*).

What is Prayer ?

SCRIPTURE READING : Matthew vii. 7 to 12

Men in the old time had indeed cried earnestly to God under the pressure of the doubts and struggles of life, but they could not pray in the full Christian significance of prayer. They felt that they and the world were wrong, and that God must be right, yet their thoughts concerning the ways of God to men were dim and confused. . . .

Christ came into the world to reveal what God was, and to explain His plan. . . . He revealed the mysteries that had driven men to prayer, such as disease, sorrow, death ; He showed that God was willing all good to His creatures, and overcoming all evil—that the eternal love was shining behind all the clouds of suffering and sorrow.

Here, then, was a new revelation of the meaning of prayer. Men were not to pray because they hoped to change God's plan, but because God's plan was the wisest and most loving. They were not to pray with the idea of inducing God to become kind, but because He *was* kind. In a word, because He was already so willing to give, they were to ask.

E. LUSCOMBE HULL.

"Thou maintainest my Lot"

Source of my life's refreshing springs,
Whose presence in my heart sustains me,
Thy love appoints me pleasant things,
Thy mercy orders all that pains me.

If loving hearts were never lonely,
If all they wish might always be,
Accepting what they look for only,
They might be glad, but not in Thee.

Well may thy own beloved, who see
In all their lot their Father's pleasure,
Bear loss of all they love, save Thee,
Their living, everlasting treasure.

Well may Thy happy children cease
From restless wishes prone to sin,
And, in Thy own exceeding peace,
Yield to Thy daily discipline.

We need as much the cross we bear,
As air we breathe, as light we see ;
It draws us to Thy side in prayer,
It binds us to our strength in Thee.

ANNA L. WARING.

"Pray without ceasing"

SCRIPTURE READING : Luke xviii. 1 to 8, and 1 Thessa-
lonians v. 17

If then you would grow in the Divine life—if you would secure the necessary renewing of the Holy Ghost, day by day—the first rule is, that you must keep the mind in contact with the truth, and keep the channel of Divine influence open by prayer.

Different modes of doing the same thing may best suit different people ; but, one way or another, the thing must be done.

Contact with the world, conversation and intercourse with different minds in various states of opinion and feeling, books, newspapers, magazines, reviews—many of them purely secular, most of them partially false ; business distractions, political excitement, social dissipation,—these and a thousand other things in the doings and details of daily life may obscure the light of truth, shade spiritual objects, pervert the moral judgment, sophisticate the conscience, and thus create a necessity for a fresh infusion of that element in which all Divine things stand fully revealed.

T. BINNEY.

Live in Prayer

Prayer is the world-plant's blossom, the bright flower,
A higher purpose of the stem and leaves ;—
Or call it the church spire, whose top receives
Such lightning calm as comforts, not aggrieves,
And with it brings the fructifying shower.

Prayer is the hand that catcheth hold on peace ;—
Nay, 'tis the very heart of nobleness
Whose pulses are the measure of the stress
Wherewith He doth us, we do Him, possess :
If these should fail, all our true life would cease.

Who live in prayer a friend shall never miss ;
If we should slip, a timely staff and kind
Placed in our grasp by hands unseen shall find ;
Sometimes upon our foreheads a soft kiss
And arms cast round us gently from behind.

HENRY S. SUTTON.

“Unto Thee do I lift up my Soul”

SCRIPTURE READING: Psalm lxxxvi. 1 to 11

Prayer is about the most elevated state of thought and feeling of which the mind is susceptible, reaching higher than the imagination of the poet when his eye is most excited, and his fancy takes its wildest flights; embracing more than the capacious thoughts of the philosopher, at the time when he has got the glimpse of some bright discovery just circling, like the sun, above the horizon, and throwing a flood of light on objects before wrapt in twilight obscurity.

How can the whole soul be so nobly or profitably employed as in holding communion with its Maker? There is no affection of the mind which is not engaged in prayer, except it be the baser and more depraved ones of our nature.

Here is reverential awe stripped of all the baseness of mere fear; here is hope, not the mere hope of earthly bliss, but of the favour of God, which, when enjoyed, is the fullest bliss. Here is faith, feeling itself firm and immovable in that being on whom it rests; and here is love, kindled at the sight of everlasting love.

JAMES M'COSE.

Prayer

Prayer the Church's banquet, Angel's age,
God's breath in man returning to his birth,
The soul in paraphrase, heart in pilgrimage,
The Christian plummet sounding heaven and earth ;

Engine against th' Almighty, sinners towre.
Reversed thunder, Christ side-piercing spear,
The six-daies world transposing in an houre,
A kind of tune, which all things heare and fear ;

Softnesse, and peace, and joy and love, and blisse,
Exalted Manna, gladnesse of the best,
Heaven in ordinarie, man well drest,
The milkie way, the bird of Paradise ;

Church-bels beyond the starres heard, the soul's blond,
The land of spices ; *something understood.*

GEORGE HERBERT.
(1593-1632).

Converse with God

SCRIPTURE READING: Psalm cxliii

Prayer is not only request made to God, but converse had with Him. It is the expression of desire to Him so as to purify it, of purpose so as to steady it, of hope so as to brighten it.

It is the bringing of one's heart into the sunshine, so that, like a plant, its inward life may thrive for an outward development. It is the plea of one's better self against one's weaker self. It utters dependence so that it may obtain confidence.

It is a humble and reverent talking with God. It is the expression and the exercise of love for all that is good and true. It is a wrestle with evil in the presence of supreme goodness. It is the ascent of the soul above time, into the freedom of eternity.

In prayer the affections expand, the spiritual becomes more real, the actual less terrible or seductive. The weakness of man allies itself with the power of God, man's penitence with God's holiness, his desire with Divine love, his finite state of want and woe with God's infinite and eternal "fullness of joy."

THOMAS T. LYNCH.

"The Lord is the Portion of mine Inheritance"

Though some good things of lower worth
My heart is called on to resign,
Of all the gifts in heaven and earth,
The best, the very best is mine.

The love of God in Christ made known—
The love that is enough alone,
My Father's love, is all my own.

My soul's Restorer, let me learn
In that deep love to live and rest ;
Let me the precious thing discern
Of which I am indeed possessed ;
My treasure let me feel and see,
And let my moments as they flee
Unfold my endless life in Thee.

Let me not dwell so much within
My bounded heart, with anxious heed ;
Where all my searches meet with sin,
And nothing satisfies my need ;
It shuts me from the sound and sight
Of that pure world of life and light
Which has no breadth, or length, or height.

Let me Thy power, Thy beauty see ;
So shall my vain aspirations cease,
And my free heart shall follow Thee
Through paths of everlasting peace.
My strength Thy gift—my life Thy care,
I shall forget to seek elsewhere
The joy to which my soul is heir.

I was not called to walk alone,
To clothe *myself* with love and light ;
And for Thy glory, not my own,
My soul is precious in Thy sight.
My evil heart can never be
A home, a heritage for me—
But Thou canst make it fit for Thee.

ANNA L. WARING.

Prayer and Power

SCRIPTURE READING: Psalm cxxx. and Matthew xvii. 14 to 21

What lasting religious influence ever sprang from prayerless regions? Our Lord Himself lived in that holy communion with the Father which is the essence of prayer. "On the lone mountain side, before the morning's light," He drew from secret fellowship strength for the day. He taught His disciples to pray, and linked power and prayer together. "This kind goeth not out, but by prayer and fasting."

And ever since power and prayer have gone together. All the great revivals and the most fruitful ministries have lived and moved in an atmosphere of prayer.

There is in every heart a profound sense of need.

"All night," said a Hindoo Sairite woman to a missionary, "when the household is sleeping, I go alone to an upper room, and stretch out my hands to the God of all, and cry with a long loud cry."

Genuine prayer is the call of this deep to the deep of God's love. No man begins to pray, or continues to pray, unless his soul hungers for the Eternal. Out of the conviction of inmost defilement, of frailty and ignorance, the cry uprises:

"I am an emptiness for Thee to fill,
My soul a cavern for Thy sea. . . .
I have done nought for Thee, am but a Want."

FRANK JOHNSON.

The Prayer

Wilt Thou not visit me ?
The plant beside me feels Thy gentle dew,
And every blade of grass I see
From Thy deep earth its quickening moisture drew.

Wilt Thou not visit me ?
Thy morning calls on me with cheering tone
And every hill and tree
Lend but one voice—the voice of Thee alone.

Come, for I need Thy love,
More than the flower the dew or grass the rain ;
Come, gently as Thy holy dove ;
And let me in Thy sight rejoice to live again.

I will not hide from them
When Thy storms come, though fierce may be their wrath,
But bow with leafy stem,
And strengthened follow on Thy chosen path.

Yes, Thou wilt visit me :
Nor plant nor tree Thine eye delights so well,
As, when from sin set free,
My spirit loves with Thine in peace to dwell.

JONES VERY.

The "Power-room"

SCRIPTURE READING: Psalm xxxiv. 1 to 10

As the power-room of the mill, though the quietest, is the most necessary, so the seasons of the soul's retirement and communion with its Redeemer are the times of richest growth and blessing. Private devotion is the measure of faith, and the measure of spiritual power as well. He who would grow in grace and in the knowledge of God must make a fight for leisure to pray.

To understand the need for prayer only in a speculative way meets no religious need. He who wishes a demonstration of the changes that may be accomplished by prayer will only get it when he has himself learned to pray.

Such changes are the secrets of those that hunger for the living God. It is not an uncommon experience to kneel before God with a feeling of utter misery. A sob is the only language left the suppliant.

But, while in the secret place, there has distilled upon him comfort and assurance, like dew falling from the night spaces upon the wilderness. Rest is found in the Lord when the soul waits upon Him, and a miracle of healing is achieved, though its only proof to others is the certainty of strength renewed.

FRANK JOHNSON.

Strength in Prayer

Lord, what a change within us one short hour
Spent in Thy presence will prevail to make ;
What heavy burdens from our bosoms take,
What parchèd grounds refresh, as with a shower !
We kneel, and all around us seems to lower ;
We rise, and all, the distant and the near,
Stand forth in sunny outline, brave and clear ;
We kneel, how weak ! we rise, how full of power !
Why, therefore, should we do ourselves the wrong,
Or others, that we are not always strong,
That we are ever overborne by care,
That we should ever weak or heartless be,
Anxious or troubled,—when with us is prayer,
And joy and strength and courage are with Thee ?

R. C. TRENCH.

When Work becomes Prayer

SCRIPTURE READING: Philippians ii. 12 to 18

If thou tell me that many times thou forgettest, during the whole day, to renew thy resignation: I answer, though it seem to thee that thou art diverted from it by attending the daily occupations of thy vocation, as studying, reading, preaching, eating, drinking, doing business, and the like, thou art mistaken, for the one destroys not the other, nor by so doing dost thou neglect to do the will of God, nor to proceed in virtual prayer.

These occupations are not contrary to His Will, nor contrary to thy resignation: it being certain that God would have thee to eat, study, take pains, do business, and so on. So that to perform these exercises, which are conformed to His Will and Pleasure, thou departest not out of His Presence, nor from thine own resignation.

A just man leaves not off to pray unless he leaves off to be just. He always prays who always does well. The good desire is prayer, and if the desire be continued so also is the prayer. . . .

MIGUEL MOLINOS.

Benediction

Father of Spirits ! Thine all secrets be.

I bless Thee for the light Thou hast revealed
And that Thou hidest. Part of me I see,

And part of me Thy wisdom hath concealed,
Till the new life divulge it. Lord, imbue me

With will to work in this diurnal sphere,
Knowing myself my life's day-labourer here,
Where evening brings the day's work wages to me.

I work my work. All its results are Thine.

I know the loyal deed becomes a fact
Which Thou wilt deal with : nor will I repine
Altho' I miss the value of the act.

Thou carest for the creatures : and the end
Thou seest. The world unto Thy hands I leave
And to Thy hands my life. I will not grieve
Because I know not all Thou dost intend.

But teach me, O Omnipotent, since strife,
Sorrow, and pain are but occurrences
Of that condition through which flows my life,
Not part of me, the immortal, whom distress
Cannot retain, to vex not thought for these :

But to be patient, bear, forbear, restrain
And hold my spirit pure above my pain.
No star, that looks thro' life's dark lattices,

But what gives token of a world elsewhere.

I bless Thee for the loss of all things here
Which proves the gain to be : the hand of Care
That shades the eyes from Earth and beckons near
The rest which sweetens all : the shade Time throws
On Love's pale countenance, that he may gaze
Across Eternity for better days
Unblinded and the wisdom of all woes.

THE EARL OF LYTTON (OWEN MEREDITH)

"I give myself to Prayer"

I give myself to prayer ;
Lord, give Thyself to me,
And let the time of my request
Thy time of answer be.

My thoughts are like the reeds,
And tremble as they grow,
In the sad current of a life
That darkly runs and slow.

The loud distressful cry
With which I call on Thee,
Shall wake me, Lord, to find that Thou
Canst give me liberty.

Freshen the air with wind,
Comfort my heart with song :
Let thoughts be lilies pure, and life
A river bright and strong.

Save me from subtle Death,
Who, serpent-like, by fear
Palsies me for escape, yet draws
His trembling victim near.

I give myself to prayer ;
Lord, give Thyself to me ;
And in the time of my distress
O, haste and succour me.

Then be my heart, my world,
Re-hallowed unto Thee,
And Thy pervading glory, Lord,
O, let me feel and see.

THOMAS T. LYNCH.

"I-WILL PRAISE THEE"

Be mute who will, who can,
Yet I will praise Thee with impassioned voice :
My lips, that may forget Thee in the crowd,
Cannot forget Thee here, where Thou hast built,
For Thy own glory, in the wilderness !

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

I sing because I love thee, Lord,
For simple joy of heart
That in a world that lives by love
I have my little part ;
The tide that bears my life along
Moves to an everlasting song.

I sing because I know thee, Lord,
When any thing I know ;
Thy presence lights the opening paths
Before me, as I go,
And all the ways I ever trod
Have brought me home, at last, to God.

I sing because I serve thee, Lord ;
E'en when my wavering will
Forgets the unforgetting Law
I needs must serve Thee still ;
Not as a slave, but as a son,
My soul would say, " Thy will be done."

I sing because I trust thee, Lord,
Amid the maze of things ;
My soul has nested in Thy peace,
And in Thy storm it sings ;
While all around me, taught of Thee,
Thy singers make sweet harmony.

W. G. TARRANT.

The Grace of Joy

Consider it
 (This outer world we tread on) as a harp—
 A gracious instrument on whose fair strings
 We learn those airs we shall be set to play
 When mortal hours are ended. Let the wings,
 Man, of thy spirit move on it as wind,
 And draw forth melody. Why should'st thou yet
 Lie grovelling? More is won than e'er was lost
 Inherit. Let thy days be to thy night
 A teller of good tidings. Let thy praise
 Go up as birds go up that, when they wake,
 Shake off the dew and soar.

So take joy home,
 And make a place in thy great heart for her,
 And give her time to grow, and cherish her;
 Then will she come, and oft will sing to thee,
 When thou art working in the furrows; aye,
 Or weeding in the sacred hour of dawn.
 It is a comely fashion to be glad—
 Joy is the grace we say to God.

Art tired?
 There is a rest remaining. Hast thou sinned?
 There is a Sacrifice. Lift up thy head;
 The lovely world, and the over-world alike,
 Ring with a song eterne, a happy rede,
 "THY FATHER LOVES THEE."

JEAN INGELow.

The Joyful Servant

SCRIPTURE READING: Philippians iii. 1, iv. 4; 1 Thessalonians v. 16 to 19

"Rejoice." It is a word to inspire workers. I want you to laugh the laugh, not of the frivolous, but of the happy. Ours is a glad religion, and I want you to be glad.

I want you to rejoice for the sake of the world, for the sake of the Church, for the sake of your Saviour, for the sake of your own being; but more especially will I say just now, for the sake of that work of yours which has reference to human good and Divine glory.

In grace, as in nature, the rule is that a happy child is a better child than an unhappy one. A soul full of joy sings better, preaches better, prays better, gives better, serves better. Of course, you are most effective in doing what you most delight to do.

You may slight a truism like this, but just because, while it is important, it is a truism, you all the more need to have it hammered on to your attention. This is why I say, look to your risen Saviour, and rejoice, in order that you may work better.

CHARLES STANFORD.

Hymn of Joy

Joyful, joyful, we adore Thee,
God of glory, Lord of love ;
Hearts unfold like flowers before Thee,
Praising Thee, their sun, above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness ;
Drive the dark of doubt away ;
Giver of immortal gladness,
Fill us with the light of day !

All Thy works with joy surround Thee,
Earth and heaven reflect Thy rays,
Stars and angels sing around Thee,
Centre of unbroken praise :
Field and forest, vale and mountain,
Blooming meadow, billowing sea,
Chanting bird and flowing fountain,
Call us to rejoice in Thee.

Thou art giving and forgiving,
Ever blessing, ever blest,
Well-spring of the joy of living,
Ocean depth of happy rest.
Thou our Father, Christ our Brother,—
All who live in love are Thine :
Teach us how to love each other,
Lift us to the Joy Divine.

Mortals, join the mighty chorus,
Which the morning stars began ;
Father-love is reigning o'er us,
Brother-love binds man to man.
Ever singing, march we onward,
Victors in the midst of strife ;
Joyful music lifts us sunward
In the triumph song of life.

HENRY VAN DYKE.

Joy springing from Love

SCRIPTURE READING: 1 Peter i. 1 to 12

Love. What shall we call it? The root of roots, the seed of seeds, the sap of saps, the juice of juices. Love is first and last. When I have love, I have everything: without love I am nothing. Love is all faith, all hope.

She is the mother and nurse of all the graces.

Joy. What is joy? Love awake and alive, fully conscious of herself.

If love be the heart's first beat, joy is its counter-beat. If love be the outflow of the heart, joy is the inflow, the flowing back of the loving heart.

The rise of temperature which love brings, the heightened being—the effervescence—that is joy.

R. W. BARBOUR.

"In Thy Presence is Fullness of Joy"

Thou hast given me a heart to desire,
Thou hast given me a soul to aspire,
A spirit to question and plead ;
I ask not what Thou hast decreed ;
I think but of love and of need ;
Thou art rich, Thou art kind, Thou art free ;
What joy shall be failing to me
Whom Thou lovest ? Thy smile and Thy kiss
Can give me back all that I miss ;
In Thy presence is fullness of bliss ;
I ask not its nature ! I know
It is life, it is youth, it is love ;
It is all that is wanting below,
It is all that is waiting above.

Is it peace that I crave ? is it rest ?
Is it love that would bless and be blest ?
All, all that Thou takest away,
Thou can'st give me again, in a day,
In an hour, in a moment ! Thy hand
Is full, and I open my breast
For the flower of my soul to expand.

DORA GREENWELL.

Thanksgiving

SCRIPTURE READING: Psalm lxvi.

From the realm of nature let me learn to praise God. *All the earth shall worship Thee*, says the psalmist. And so the earth does: the snow-capped mountains, the tossing sea, the golden fields of harvest, the thorn-bushes in the wilderness, the violets by mossy stones. In such a chorus and concert of thanksgiving it will be surprising and sinful if my voice remains silent.

From the events of history let me learn to praise God. *He turned the sea into dry land*, the psalmist remembers; *they went through the flood on foot*. And His marvellous interpositions and deliverances are as conspicuous in the annals of Britain as in those of Israel. It is not secular history; it is sacred. Let me see His presence and trace His steps, and thank Him for His wonderful works.

From the discipline of sorrow let me learn to praise God. *We went through fire and through water*, the Psalmist writes; *but Thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place*. It is what God always intends by His chastenings. In themselves they are not joyous, but grievous; yet they are meant and fitted to yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness. I should profit by them, and adore Him for them.

From the harvests of prayer let me learn to praise God. *Blessed be God*, cries the psalmist, *which hath not turned away my prayer, nor His mercy from me*. This seeking and finding, this kneeling in weakness and rising in strength, this personal putting of my Lord to the test, and discovering how able and willing He is to succour: what rich reasons for gratitude are here!

Therefore I will sing forth the glory of His name.

ALEXANDER SMELLIE.

A Thanksgiving

Lord, in this dust Thy sovereign voice
First quicken'd love divine ;
I am all Thine—Thy care and choice,
My very praise is Thine.

I praise Thee, while Thy providence
In childhood frail I trace,
For blessings given, ere dawning sense
Could seek or scan Thy grace ;

Blessings in boyhood's marvelling hour,
Bright dreams, and fancies strange ;
Blessings, when reason's awful power
Gave thought a bolder range ;

Blessings of friends, which to my door
Unask'd, unhop'd, have come ;
And, choicer still, a countless store
Of eager smiles at home.

Yet, Lord, in memory's fondest place
I shrine those seasons sad,
When, looking up, I saw Thy face
In kind austereness clad.

I would not miss one sigh or tear,
Heart-pang, or throbbing brow ;
Sweet was the chastisement severe,
And sweet its memory now.

Yes ! let the fragrant scars abide,
Love-tokens in Thy stead,
Faint shadows of the spear-pierced side
And thorn-encompass'd head.

JOHN HENRY NEWMAN.

My Hymn of Thankfulness

I bring my hymn of thankfulness
To Thee, dear Lord, to-day ;
Though not for joys Thy name I bless,
And not for gifts I pray.
The griefs that know not man's redress
Before Thy feet I lay.

Master ! I thank Thee for the sin
That taught mine eyes to see
What depths of loving lie within
The heart that broke for me ;
What patience human want can win
From God's divinity.

I thank Thee for the blank despair,
When friend and love forsake,
That taught me how Thy cross to bear,
Who bore it for my sake,
And showed my lonely soul a prayer
That from Thy lips I take.

I thank Thee for the life of grief
I share with all below,
Wherein I learn the sure relief
My brother's heart to know,
And in the wisdom taught of pain
To soothe and share his woe.

What fullness of my earthly store
What shine of harvest sun,
What ointment on Thy feet to pour,
What honoured race to run,
What joyful song of thankfulness,
Here ended or begun,
Shall mate with mine, who learn so late
To know Thy will is done ?

ROSE TERRY COOKE.

Constant Mercy—Constant Praise

SCRIPTURE READING: Lamentations iii. 22 to 33

New every morning the Lord's compassions are. Then His goodness is manifold. He plans something surprising with each sunrise. He never allows one dawn simply to repeat that which preceded it. He subjects me to a discipline different from any I experienced before, or, He enriches me with a peace such as I never enjoyed before. Life is filled with His miracles for those who have eyes to see them. It is endlessly original. Faultless wisdom, untiring faithfulness, perfect love, preside over the history of His children.

New every morning God's compassions are. Then I am strangely blind and thankless. I have never taken proper note of His increasing kindlinesses. I ought to go through the world seeing visions and dreaming dreams. About every spot I should bear Jacob's witness, "*This is the house of God, and the gate of Heaven.*" Aye, and where has been my gratitude? Sometimes He sends me a messenger of mirth, and sometimes a messenger of mourning; but His love comes with both, and for both I should have given thanks.

New every morning His compassions are. Then my soul should be a shrine of hope. The love of God for the Church and for the world is not wearied yet, and it never will be. The past and the present have enjoyed no monopoly of His power; He fainteth not. And am I harassed by anxieties, or tormented by spiritual doubts and fears, or inclined to despair because I am the chief of sinners? Ah, but His mercies "aye endure, ever faithful, ever sure." To-day He waits to bless even me.

ALEXANDER SMELLIE.

Alleluia

For the loveliness of dawn upon the sleeping sea,
For the vapours spun of mist of pearl, where great lights be,
Alleluia.

For the winding roads that lead up through the fields of air,
Whither angels that have kept their watches homeward fare,
Alleluia.

For the wonder of the waking world, her silences,
For the magic of her moving colours' gentleness,
Alleluia.

For the love that, lest our faith and hope wax faint and cold,
Opens morn and eve a vision of the City of Gold,
Alleluia.

Of what sort must be Thy country ? Oh to think that we
Have a portion in a beauty passing earth, air, sea !
Alleluia.

AMY WILSON CARMICHAEL.

The Life of Praise

SCRIPTURE SEED THOUGHT: Ephesians v. 19 and 20

"I will bless the Lord." "I will bless the Lord at all times: His praise shall continually be in my mouth."

"O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good: for His mercy endureth for ever. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom He hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy; therefore will I offer in His tabernacle sacrifices of joy."

"Give thanks unto the Lord, call upon His name, make known His deeds among the people. Sing unto Him, sing psalms unto Him, talk ye of all His wondrous works. Glory ye in His Holy Name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord. My mouth shall speak the praise of the Lord: and let all flesh bless His Holy Name for ever and ever." "Thus saith the Lord: fear not, for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: for I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour."

"Thou art near, O Lord, and all Thy commandments are truth. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, Thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways."

"For Thou will light my candle: the Lord my God will enlighten my darkness."

The Melody in the Heart

What room is there for troubled fear ?
I know my Lord, and He is near ;
And He will light my candle, so
That I may see the way to go—
O Love, O Light, I sing to Thee,
And in my heart make melody.

There need be no bewilderment
To one who goes where he is sent ;
The trackless plain by night and day
Is set with signs, lest he should stray :
O Love, O Light, I sing to Thee,
And in my heart make melody.

My path may cross the lonely sea,
But that need never frighten me ;
Or rivers full to very brim,
But they are open ways to Him :
O Love, O Light, I sing to Thee,
And in my heart make melody.

My path may lead through woods at night,
Where neither moon nor any light
Of guiding star or beacon shines ;
He will not let me miss my signs :
O Love, O Light, I sing to Thee,
And in my heart make melody.

Lord, grant to me a quiet mind,
That trusting Thee, for Thou art kind,
I may go on without a fear,
For Thou, my Lord, art always near :
O Love, O Light, I sing to Thee,
And in my heart make melody.

AMY WILSON CARMICHAEL.

A Song of Praise

Thou wast, O God : and Thou wast blest
 Before the world begun ;
 Of Thine Eternity possesst
 Before Time's glass did run.
 Thou needest none Thy praise to sing,
 As if Thy joy could fade.
 Could'st Thou have needed anything,
 Thou could'st have nothing made.

Great and good God, it pleasèd Thee
 Thy Godhead to declare ;
 And what Thy goodness did decree
 Thy greatness did prepare ;
 Thou spak'st, and heaven and earth appeared
 And answered to Thy call ;
 As if their Maker's voice they heard,
 Which is the creature's all.

To whom, Lord, should I sing but Thee,
 The Maker of my tongue ?
 Lo ! other lords would seize on me,—
 But I to Thee belong.
 As waters haste unto their sea,
 And earth unto its earth,
 So let my soul return to Thee
 From whom it had its birth.

But ah ! I'm fallen in the night,
 And cannot come to Thee ;
 Yet speak the word, *Let there be Light*,
 It shall enlighten me :
 And let Thy word, most mighty Lord,
 Thy fallen creatures raise,
 So make me o'er again, and I
 Shall sing my Maker's praise.

JOHN MASON (1690).

LIFE: DAY BY DAY

Oh ! how much lightlier can the spirit leap
A moment to the summit's dazzling way
Than on the lower level steadfast keep
Her foothold day by day.

DOROTHY FRANCES GURNEY.

Christ calls, but does not always call away

To one calls Christ, "Quit boat and bay,
And white-hair'd Zebedee":
To most the word is harder: "Stay,
And cast thy nets for Me."

FREDERICK LANGBRIDGE.

The Golden Cord

Through every minute of this day,
Be with me, Lord !
Through every day of all this week,
Be with me, Lord !
Through every week of all this year,
Be with me, Lord !
Through all the years of all this life,
Be with me, Lord !
So shall the days and weeks and years
Be threaded on a golden cord,
And all draw on with sweet accord
Unto Thy fullness, Lord,
That so, when time is past,
By Grace, I may at last,
Be with Thee, Lord.

JOHN OXENHAM.

Nourishment of the Soul

SCRIPTURE READING: John iv. 31 to 34 and vi. 41 to 51

The New Testament knows nothing about, so called, abstract truth. It abhors abstractions, as *non-entities*. It treats of *things*: its terms, therefore, are always concrete. From beginning to end, the religion of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is strictly *substantive*. The end of which is *the organic development of the One Absolutely Living Substance, in the New Nature of believers*.

As is the man, such must be his bread. "*The first man is of the earth, earthy,*" and must have earthy bread. The bread which cometh forth out of the earth is full of earth, and for the earth; first, for the living earthy body, and finally for the dead earth once more, when the body relapses to its origin, "earth to earth." It is "*the bread that perisheth*"; and all who live thereby perish. It is the bread of death, in distinction from "True Bread," which is *Living Bread*.

"The Bread of God" is as full of God as the bread of the earth is full of earth. "The Bread of God" is *God our Bread*. As it is written, "*Man liveth by that which proceedeth out of the mouth of God.*" The world, and all things that are therein, subsist by the mediation of the sun. Grass, and herbs, and trees, and all creatures, live not by the earth alone, but chiefly by solar heat and light. The sun is essential bread to all natures; and is ever and ever coming down to give Life unto the world.

But immortal spirits want a very different Bread. Spirits want Spirit-bread. If the fallen spirits of men are ever to become Divine-natured spirits, they must not only eat spirit-bread, but Divine Spirit-Bread. "*Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead.* But," the Bread of God "*cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.*"

JOHN PULSFORD.

Day by Day

"Give us this day our daily bread,"
The force to toil, the strength to bear;
By Thee the day-long march is led,
Thy hand the manna will prepare.

"Give us this day our daily bread,"
Thyself to be our portion give;
That food of which the Saviour said,
"The man that eateth it shall live."

To Thee have passed our yesterdays,
Our morrows still are out of sight,
And all our service, all Thy praise,
Lie here between the dawn and night.

Our hearts are weak, the years are long,
We could not bear the whole of life;
God has not made our harness strong
For more than one day's watch and strife.

Our daily bread thus give us, Lord,
And teach us not to gather more:
Poor are we in our narrow hoard,
Rich only nourished from Thy store.

LUCY F. MASSEY.

The First Thought

SCRIPTURE READING: Matt. vi. 24 to 34

In the morning of life I would seek God's kingdom and righteousness. So I shall make my own happiness secure; for, let poverty or riches be mine, my soul will always have its song to sing if I know Father and Son and Holy Spirit. Thus, too, I shall best serve my generation; for it has no benefactor compared with Him whose speech and behaviour are a remembrance of the world in which God is supreme. And in this way my life will be a unity; so that age will approve of youth, and death will complete the same.

At the outset of each day I would seek God's kingdom and righteousness. To go apart and speak with Him ere I travel forth to the tasks of home and business, to remind myself again of what I owe to Christ, to seek a fresh anointing of the Holy Ghost before I encounter the temptations and the worries and the wearinesses of the world: oh, what a solace it is! what a bulwark and defence! what a support and a supply! He is likely to demean himself graciously, and bravely, every day, who has inaugurated it with such communion and such consecration.

In preference to all other aims and ends I would seek God's kingdom and righteousness. Many things indeed are lawful, many avocations praiseworthy; and I have to fulfil myself and to serve my fellows in a multitude of ways; no pinched and starved and ascetic career is mapped out for me. But this is to be my polestar—God, God's Son, God's will, God's cause. To Him I am always to return. His approval is to be my reward. His service is to be my freedom and joy.

First, first in every possible mode, I would seek God.

ALEXANDER SMELLIE.

Come to me, Lord

Come to me, Lord, when first I wake,
As the faint lights of morning break ;
Bid purest thoughts within me rise,
Like crystal dewdrops, to the skies.

Come to me in the sultry noon ;
Or earth's low communings will soon
Of Thy dear face eclipse the light,
And change my fairest day to night.

Come to me in the evening shade ;
And if my heart from Thee have strayed,
Oh ! bring it back, and from afar
Smile on me like Thine evening star.

Come to me in the midnight hour ;
When sleep withholds her balmy power,
Let my lone spirit find its rest,
Like John, upon my Saviour's breast.

Come to me through life's varied way ;
And when its pulses cease to play,
Then, Saviour, bid me *come to Thee*,
That where Thou art Thy child may be.

H. V. TEBBS.

Daily Manna

SCRIPTURE READING: Exodus xvi. 11 to 18

The daily bread is the gift of God. It is not a thing common and usual, and I should never partake of it without reverence. There may not be about its bestowal the same manifest miraculousness which marked the coming of the manna; but behind the loaf and the grain, above the farmer and the miller, the Father of lights stands unseen. It would be an easy thing for Him to spoil my harvests and to leave me destitute. All to Him I owe. Apart from Him I must go a beggar and in rags. And do I praise Him for his largess humbly and heartily?

The daily bread is to be received in faith. Morning by morning the men of Israel gathered the manna; and I am not encouraged to hoard up provision against the future. My Lord would prove me, by keeping me a perpetual pensioner on His charity, and a continual guest at His table. I never can be self-centred. I should scarcely be of those about whom Sir Thomas Browne writes, who "over-rule their stars, and with their own militia contend with the host of heaven." I am taught to cling, to trust, to wait, to hope.

The daily bread is a parable of sacred things. The children of Israel *wist not* what the manna was. There was in it something unearthly. When I sit at table, a window should be opened into a diviner world. I should see Him who is Bread of my spirit, and who gives the Water of an everlasting life. Him, too, I must seek and find every morning. I cannot thrive on the grace of yesterday. I must welcome a new pardon, a new sanctity, a new strength, to foil the world and the flesh and the devil. With each sunrising mine ought to be a fuller Christ.

ALEXANDER SMELLIE.

Sustenance by the Hour

Give us our bread to-day—

We trust Thee for to-morrow;

We do not seek to tell the way

Through paths of coming sorrow:

We know, when these draw near,
The wall that bars our view
Shall open in a gateway clear,
And we shall enter through.

Give us our bread to-day—
We live but by the hour ;
The future hath its hidden ray,
And shall reveal its power :
We ask for present light
To lift the pressing load,
To help us o'er the steps of sight
Into faith's unseen road.

Give us our bread to-day—
We ask not from our Father
Manna in greater stores to lay
Than each morn's need can gather :
Our nourishment for morn
Might furnish us at even,
For at each stage we are new-born,
And need new bread from heaven.

Give us our bread to-day—
I ask for *ours*, not mine ;
Should I for unshared blessings pray,
My prayer is not divine :
Thou hast ordained Thy bread
To pass from hand to hand,
Till each shall see Thy banquet spread
Through all the desert land.

Give us our bread to-day,
And as each finds his rest,
Let him turn his gladdened eyes away
To those not yet so blest ;
And from board with plenty filled
Let his word of grace be said,
"Remember those with fields untill'd—
Give them their daily bread."

GEORGE MATHESON.

Sunrise Days

SCRIPTURE READING: Genesis xix. 15 to 23

Now there are moods of the soul consequent upon certain experiences which have power to bring out the sun. There are moments, hours, days, in which, unless we have lost something which we must not lose, else all is lost, the sun comes out—moments, hours, days, in which we taste the rapture at once of poets and of saints.

Lot was enjoying one of those blessed hours. He did not deserve it. But we none of us deserve the great things which God gives. The best we can hope for is that, once they have come, we shall be worthy of them.

The hour when a man definitely breaks from some ignobleness in his life, when he has done with something which, it may be, he wished a thousand times in secret he were done with—that is a mood of the soul which drags the sun from its bed. I know of no experience which so immediately assures a man of God as a victory of that kind in some long-contested battlefield. In such an hour you are beyond all discussion or argument. You know. You feel.

At such a time you do not so much believe in God: you manifest God: He is with you. Reasons and arguments are of use only when we are not very sure, only when we are in difficulties, and are determined to hold on. In the hours when we really believe, we have no ear for proofs. We sing, we mount up with wings, we run and are not weary.

JOHN A. HUTTON.

Unusual Days

*"And this day shall be unto you for a memorial."—EXODUS
xii. 14*

There come unusual days, which on life's plain
Stand out for memory's gaze—days of rare joy,
Or startling incident, or unhopèd gain,
Alas! too oft of more than wonted pain,
Or woe that breaks the heart. Such days destroy
The sameness of life's course, and add one more
To the year's units, heaping hence our store
Of good or evil. Ne'er can we maintain
The calendar unbroken, but must meet
The change which is corrective. Lord, when Thou
Put'st in my time a day, as Thou dost now,
Unknown in other years, grant, I entreat,
Such grace illumine it, that, whate'er its phase,
It add to holiness, and lengthen praise.

LORD KINLOCH.

Our Days

SCRIPTURE READING: Psalm cii.

Here you have the story of a sorrowful soul, wandering up and down on the sad plane of its sorrows, one unhappy thing recalling another, until the last speck of blue is blotted out from the sky. "I am like a sparrow alone on a house-top"; "my heart is withered like grass"—so this sad soul communes with itself.

When suddenly, in the very middle of the psalm, the man remembers something he had quite forgotten; he remembers God: and from that moment the gloom and burden and silence are swept from his spirit.

In both cases, though on such vastly different levels, one thing happened—the man found himself in a blissful harmony with the surroundings which he was yearning for: in the one case the light and the freshness of the natural world: in the other case, the understanding and sympathy of God. In each case, looking back, unless the man has a most ungrateful memory, he will say, it was "a day in a thousand."

It is part of the art of living to keep alive within ourselves the power of our own good days. To believe in them when days of another kind overtake us: and not at the first approach of evil to speak foolishly concerning God. It is a wonderful faculty which none of us, I am sure, uses as we might—and prayer is simply the highest exercise of it—the faculty of drawing about our souls the atmosphere and surrounding which disposes us to be patient, or strong, or faithful, or happy, as the need of the moment may be.

JOHN A. HUTTON.

Exalted and Ordinary Days

Why doth one day excel another, when the light of every day in the year is the sun? By the knowledge of the Lord they were distinguished; and He varied seasons and feasts: some of them He exalted and hallowed, and some of them hath He made ordinary days.—ECCLESIASTICUS xxxiii. 7-9.

Why doth one day excel another, when the light
Of each is Thee? O Lord, I do not know.
But since, Lord, it is so,
I come to Thee
Who didst create both these my days and me.

Our exalted days require Thee; lest our thought
Escaping downward by some secret door
Grovel as heretofore.
Hallow, O Lord, our holy days, that nought
May turn Thee from us through those blessed hours
When all our walks and gardens offer flowers.

Our ordinary days without Thy touch
Die double deaths. The Usual cries to Thee
To quicken speedily
Its sometime barrenness; for life has much
Of sandy levels. Do Thou, Lord, inspire
Our ordinary: be our dull days' Fire.

Creator of my individual days
All variously distinguished, each is good
Distributed by Thee; my gratitude
Bestir; awaken praise.
Look back I dare not, knowing what I know;
O great Forgiver, flow
Over my yesterday; and my to-day,
Let it be clear and precious. I commit
Its outgoings to Thee: Lord, hallow it.

AMY WILSON CARMICHAEL.

Days of Waiting

SCRIPTURE READING : John xx. 19 to 23 ; Acts i. 12 to 14, and ii. 1

In every life there are spaces and tracts which, from the point of view of one's essential spirit, are of little consequence. There are common days, when we simply go on. But there are days of another kind, days when our heart and flesh cry out—it may be with joy ; it may be in pain. On the way of life by which we all of us travel things meet us which have the effect of challenging our final faith and motive.

Now, if anything like this has come to us in these recent days, or is about us now, there is guidance for us in the example of those first followers of Jesus, and a good hope from their experience.

These waited, not idly, not with vacant minds. Still less did they wait selfishly. They met together. They spoke to one another of what they knew in common, and of how they were being helped through one day and another.

But they never doubted that this was not all that God intended for them. What further was coming to them of course they did not know, any more than we know. They kept the door upon the latch for Christ. They mused and mused. Until one day the fire burned. Their hearts became full to the point of overflowing : and where should hearts that are full of faith and of vision—where should they overflow but on a parched and hungry world ! “ *The day of Pentecost was fully come.* ”

JOHN A. HUTTON.

Thy Days go on

Take from my head the thorn-wreath brown !
No mortal grief deserves that crown.
O supreme Love, chief misery,
The sharp regalia are for Thee,
Whose days eternally go on !

For us—whatever's undergone,
Thou knowest, willest what is done.
Grief may be joy misunderstood ;
Only the Good discerns the good.
I trust Thee while my days go on

Whatever's lost, it first was won ;
We will not struggle nor impugn.
Perhaps the cup was broken here,
That Heaven's new wine might show more clear.
I praise Thee while my days go on.

I praise Thee while my days go on ;
I love Thee while my days go on ;
Through dark and dearth, through fire and frost,
With emptied arms and treasure lost,
I thank Thee while my days go on.

And having in Thy life-depth thrown
Being and suffering (which are one),
As a child drops his pebble small
Down some deep well, and hears it fall
Smiling—so I. Thy days go on.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

"Do All in the Name"

SCRIPTURE READING: 1 Corinthians x. 31, and Colossians iii.
12 to 17

There seems to us a deepening conviction that the Divine energies must descend upon the soul and bear witness to themselves; and that the chief human preparation must be a surrendered will and a quiet waiting upon God.

By waiting we do not mean the suspension of duty, or the passive ecstasy of devotion alone. God comes to us in the common tasks and in the daily toil. The morning dawns without tumult, and the flowers open silently.

And, so it may be, as we do what is called secular work in the heavenly mood of faithfulness there will come the clear shining of the Master's presence.

We may look up from the dusty, weary road, and see Jesus at our side, and behold all things transfigured into beauty.

FRANK JOHNSON.

Weekday

Lord, I on every day
With grateful heart would say,
"Thy truths are sure and beautiful;
How can my life grow dull?"

And when I eat and drink,
I joyfully would think,
That all Thou hast created good
May be a wise man's food.

And as I work and trade,
Pay others, and am paid,
"Knowledge," I'll say, "we must not cease
To exchange, and so increase."

And when I hear the crowd
In busy traffic loud,
I'll cry, "How sweet would be the sound
Were all but brothers found!"

And when my friends at night
Count my return delight,
I'll think how pleased my God will be
His child in heaven to see.

THOMAS T. LYNCH.

Days of God

The days that were, the days that are,
They all are days of God ;
With psalms of cheerful trust we tread
Where Christ's own freemen trod.

We bless the love of larger noon
That moved the loyal heart
In evil times to trust the true,
And choose the better part.

God of the fathers ! God of Christ !
Keep us in simple ways ;
And in the calm of silent hills
Train us for clamorous days.

For those who find the tempest strong
Make us a hiding-place,
A shadow in a weary land
For healing and for grace.

When love for man is growing cold,
And many faithless prove,
Then may the Man of Sorrows come
And teach us how to love.

We tarry, Lord, Thy leisure still ;
Thy best is yet to be :
Naught ever comes too late for man
That is in time for Thee.

God of our fathers ! God of Christ !
Keep us in simple ways ;
And may the sharpness of the strife
Be to Thy greater praise.

HOWELL ELVET LEWIS.

THE LIFE OF TRUST

Heaven flies down on Little Wings

Angels to me no message bring :
I cannot hear their harps accord :
But often from a sparrow's wing
There falls the glory of the Lord.

FREDERICK LANGBRIDGE.

We are not driftwood on the wave ;
But like the ships, that tempests brave,
Our hearts upon their voyage stand :
We utter no unheeded cry,
"Where is my God ?" Lo, He is nigh,
And says, "Take, child, thy Father's hand."

THOMAS T. LYNCH.

"Rest in the Lord, wait patiently for Him"

Oh, the little birds sang east, and the little birds
sang west,
And I said in underbreath, All our life is mixed
with death,
And who knoweth which is best ?

Oh, the little birds sang east, and the little birds
sang west,
And I smiled to think God's greatness flowed
around our incompleteness,
Round our restlessness, His rest.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

"Jesus called a Little Child"

SCRIPTURE READING: Matthew xviii. 1 to 14

I look into the child's face. There are no haughty lines of pride. There is no blatant self-assertiveness. Modesty is written on it. And can I get back my vanished humility? I can. God the Spirit creates it within me in my conversion. And He fosters it more and more, as He keeps me leaning on my Saviour, my Sanctifier, my Friend of friends.

I survey the child's mind. It is teachable. It comes soon to be aware of its ignorance, and it hungers for knowledge of every sort. And, when God touches my mind, I feel myself in the presence of mysteries waiting to be unfolded, and great tracts of truth to be explored. I have parted with the delusion of my own wisdom. I sit at the feet of my Prophet, Christ.

I peer into the child's imagination. It lives in a realm of miracle. "The corn was orient and immortal wheat," says Thomas Traherne. "The dust and stones of the streets were as precious as gold. The gates were the end of the world." The Holy Ghost can lead me back into the magical country. He unveils the marvels of grace. The sense of wonder is reborn.

I remember the child's affection. His is love unbounded, enthusiastic, outspoken. Convention freezes the love-look in my eyes and the love-speech on my tongue. But the sight of God's grace in Christ breaks the ice again. It brings back the spring-time. It ends my frigid reticence, and makes my heart thankful, susceptible, responsive.

"Behold, my childhood is dead!" Augustine laments. But may my childhood be begotten anew into ageless life.

ALEXANDER SMELLIE.

The Child in the Midst

Once in my strength I came to God
With martial tramp and clang.
The temple trembled as I trod,
And the startled echoes rang.

But I found the altar lone and bare,
And the place of God was chill ;
No sign of the living fire was there,
And the voice of God was still.

" Why art Thou silent, when I come
To do some work for Thee ?
Thine altar cold, and the oracles dumb,
And scarcely a light to see ? "

And I heard a whisper that stirred the gloom,
And my soul sank quiet and mild :
" There is might enow in the world—make room
For the day of the little child.

" For the lonely and meek who fear to seek
The road o'er the hills afar ;
And those whose gaze through sorrow's haze
Has lost My guiding star.

" Ye will find no flame in My house again,
And earth will be fever-wild,
Until ye bring to the strifes of men
The love of a little child."

L. MACLEAN WATT.
(From "*The Poet's Corner*.")

"*As a Lily*"

SCRIPTURE READING: Matthew vi. 25 to 34

Meditation

A nineteenth-century mystic—John Pulsford—when in the act of kneeling down before the Lord his God, saw a little bird perched near his window. To him, the bird hopping from spray to spray seemed to preach thus:

"O thou grave man, look on me, and learn something, if not the deepest lesson, then a true one. Thy God made me, and the like of me; and, if thou canst conceive it, loves me and cares for me. *Thou* studiest Him in great problems, which oppress and confound thee: thou lovest sight of one half of His ways. Learn to see thy God not in great mysteries only, but in me also. Things deep as Hell and high as Heaven thou considerest overmuch; but thou dost not 'consider the lilies' sufficiently.

"If *thou* could'st be as a lily before God, for at least one hour in the twenty-four, it would do thee good: I mean, if thou could'st cease to will and to think, and *be* only.

"Consider, the lily is as really from God as thou art, and is a figure of something *in Him*—the like of which should also be *in thee*. Thou longest to grow, but the lily grows without longing; yes, without even thinking or willing, *grows* and is beautiful both to God and man. Think of that.

"In conclusion, I remind thee that God has 'many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification.' But I perceive that thine ear is open only to voices of one kind. Thy danger is under the conceit of being the more godly, of becoming monstrous, and not quite Godlike.

"Excuse a little bird. I am but one of the 'many kinds of voices' which God has 'in the world.'"

The Lily

He hides within the lily
A strong and tender care,
That wins the earth-born atoms
To glory of the air ;
He weaves the shining garments
Unceasingly and still,
Along the quiet waters,
In niches of the hill.

We linger at the vigil
With Him who bent the knee
To watch the old-time lilies
In distant Galilee ;
And still the worship deepens
And quickens into new,
As, brightening down the ages,
God's secret thrilleth through.

O Toiler of the lily,
Thy touch is in the Man !
No leaf that dawns to petal
But hints the angel-plan.
The flower-horizons open !
The blossom vaster shows !
We hear Thy wide world's echo—
See how the lily grows !

Shy yearnings of the savage,
Unfolding thought by thought,
To holy lives are lifted,
To visions fair are wrought ;
The races rise and cluster,
And evils fade and fall,
Till chaos blooms to beauty,
Thy purpose crowning all !
W. C. GANNETT.

Love and Life

"Love—is the 'Perfect Tense' of Life"

SCRIPTURE READING: I John iv. 10 to 16

Great is the intimacy between the sun and our flesh, when he diffuses his heat through and through every atom of our flesh, every drop of our blood; but greater still, far greater, is the intimacy between God and human souls—the souls that love Him. For their love to Him is *His own Love*, dwelling in them; and the relation must indeed be close, and not only close, but indissoluble, between God and His own Love.

As soon as the soul quits its *own life*, the Life of God enters in, and possesses that soul. Strictly speaking, the life of man is the Divine Life in him. Hence the repeated teaching of our Lord, that, whoever keepeth his fallen life, shall never regain his original life.

Vacate, turn your back upon, your own apostate life, and receive with open arms the Life which, in the beginning, God gave to man, and has given to him again, in His Son. "This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son." How strong the house of your spirit will be, how august, how serene, how meekly bold, how boldly meek, when God alone is the life thereof!

"It doth not yet appear what we shall be." This much the Lord assures us, that we, who are now struggling and groaning in these tabernacles of dust, shall presently shine forth as suns, through the indwelling of the Divine Glory.

JOHN PULSFORD.

Lover of Souls

Lover of souls, Thee have I heard,
Thee will I sing, for sing I must,
Thy good and comfortable word
Hath raised my spirit from the dust.

In dusty ways My feet had strayed,
And foolish fears laid hold on me,
Until what time I was afraid
I suddenly remembered Thee.

Remembering Thee, I straight forgot
What otherwhile had troubled me ;
It was as if it all were not,
I only was aware of Thee.

Of Thee, of Thee alone, aware,
I rested me, I held me still,
The blessed thought of Thee, most Fair,
Banished the brooding sense of ill.

And quietness around me fell,
And Thou did'st speak ; my spirit heard ;
I worshipped and rejoiced ; for well
I knew Thy comfortable word.

Whoso hath known that comforting,
The inward touch that maketh whole,
How can he ever choose but sing
To Thee, O Lover of his soul ?

AMY WILSON CARMICHAEL.

The Heavenly Gardener

SCRIPTURE READING: Central Thought—Isaiah lxi. 11. See also Canticles vi. 2, 3, and 11

Let us now return to our orchard, or flower-garden, and behold now how the trees begin to fill with sap for the bringing forth of the blossoms, and then of the fruit—the flowers and the plants, also their fragrance. This illustration pleases me; for very often, when I was beginning—and our Lord grant that I have really begun to serve His Majesty—it was to me a great joy to consider my soul as a garden, and our Lord as walking in it. I used to beseech Him to increase the fragrance of the little flowers of virtues—which were beginning, as it seemed, to bud—and preserve them, that they might be to His glory; for I desired nothing for myself. I prayed Him to cut those He liked, because I already knew that they would grow the better.

Remaining in myself, without Thee, I could be nothing, O my Lord, but be as the withered flowers of the garden; so that this miserable earth of mine becomes a heap of refuse, as it was before.

ST. THERESA.

Come, Bud of Joy

Come, bud of joy, the driving rain
That all thy young green leaves doth wet,
Is but a minister of gain
To that which in thy heart is set.
Come forth, my bud : awake and see
How good thy Gardener is to thee.

And pass, my bud, to perfect flower,
Dread not the blast of bitter wind ;
Thy Maker doth command its power ;
It knoweth not to be unkind.
Haste thee, my flower ; unfold and see
How good thy Gardener is to thee.

O fruit that cometh after rain,
O fruit that ripeneth in the sun,
Now praised be God that not in vain
For Thee the changeful seasons run.
O fruit of mine, make all men see
How good thy Gardener is to thee.

O Thou, whose cold grey rain did beat,
And sudden blasts of grievous wind,
Whose sun devoured me with his heat,
I know Thee wise, I know Thee kind.
Let all who look be caused to see
How good my Gardener is to me.

And when the sap in me doth fail
And natural vigour of my youth,
Then may Thy life in me prevail,
That I may still show forth in truth
By flower and fruit on this my tree,
How good my Gardener is to me.

AMY WILSON CARMICHAEL.

Peace by Power

SCRIPTURE READING: Psalm lxxii. 1 to 7

Spiritual serenity is spiritual strength. It comes in by no softness of sentiment, but by thorough work. It comes by a faith that emboldens and energises the whole soul, a penitence that searches and strains it, and often a secret fight of afflictions. Christianity is a robust religion. It was planted in the world by a race of heroes. Its great starts forward, into new continents and epochs, have been made through martyrdoms. The blood of sacrifice has watered its roots.

As the mountains bring peace, the sublimity of the Christian ideas tranquillises. That Faith insists that we shall be brave men, in order to be peaceable men; that the people of God shall work, even as the Father worked, to obtain the rest that remaineth for them; that they shall strive, through a strait gate and a narrow way, to enter in where are pleasures for evermore.

F. D. HUNTINGTON.

For Serenity of Soul

Lord, I would ask this gift Divine—
Serenity of soul,
That when wild winds and white-ridged waves
Around me roar and roll,
I may be stronger than the storm
Through silent self-control.

This is the secret I would find,
And finding would be blest,
That in the time of restlessness
I could be still and rest,
And see the changing good and ill,
Each working for the best.

Oh, for the calm of conscious trust
That still is unafraid,
When a cross fresh in form and weight
Upon my life is laid,
That still can bless the skilful Hand
By which that cross was made.

In all the wounding war of tongues
Which never seem to cease,
From futile fear and fretfulness
I seek a full release,
To hear more clear the undertones
Of Thine eternal peace.

Whatever labours be my lot,
Some must be wrought with pain,
Yet to this ruling, tranquil thought
Each day I would attain,
That nothing love may do for Thee
Is ever done in vain.

Lord ! constant as each coming care
My constant prayer fulfil,
Give me the gentle grace of calm,
The art of being still,
The spirit that in silence waits
Each whisper of Thy will.

WALTER J. MATHAMS.

"*Fear Not!*"

SCRIPTURE READING: Isaiah xli. 8 to 14

God has made *Fear not*s to address to my soul.

Fear not, He tells me, *for I have redeemed thee*. My past brings me trouble. Mistakes committed, duties neglected, guilt incurred—these make sad the retrospect of my years. I have wrecked my own life, injured others, forgotten God. But there is healing. He concerns Himself with my locust-eaten yesterday. He forgives it through the might of Christ's Cross. He grants me freedom. He can use my very errors to humble, quicken, soften, sanctify me. He redeems me from my past.

Fear not, He tells me again, *for I am with thee*. My present stirs disquietude. Apart from my Saviour, I am still weak as water before temptation, an easy prey to the enemy, the servant of sin. But God remains with me, to preserve my soul from death and my feet from falling and my eyes from tears. By His providence, His Gospel, His Spirit, He educates and purifies me. I know not which to marvel at more: Christ's suffering for me on the Tree, or Christ's long-suffering with me always.

Fear not, He tells me once more, *for I will help thee*. The future has its distresses. I foresee many perplexities, many solitudes, much weariness, much struggle. But my Lord will go before me. History says that, when Attila was about to plunder Rome, Leo, the minister of Christ, interceded with him, and the barbarian captain spared the city. So, feeble as I am in myself, I shall be more than a conqueror over all the contingencies of the future, when God in Jesus Christ strengthens me.

To His *Fear not* let me make reply, *I will not fear*.

ALEXANDER SMELLIE.

"I will fear no Evil"

In pastures green ? Not always ; sometimes He
Who knoweth best, in kindness leadeth me
By weary ways, where heavy shadows be.

And by still waters ? No, not always so ;
Ofttimes the heavy tempests round me blow,
And o'er my soul the waves and billows go.

But when the storm is loudest, and I cry
Aloud for help, the Master standeth by,
And whispers to my soul, " Lo, it is I."

Above the tempests wild I hear Him say,
" Beyond this darkness lies the perfect day ;
In every path of thine I lead the way."

So, whether on the hill-tops high and fair
I dwell, or in the sunless valleys where
The shadows lie—what matter ? He is there.

HENRY H. BARRY.

"The Desert shall blossom as the Rose"

SCRIPTURE READING: Isaiah **xxxiv.**

Desert places, weak hands, feeble knees, fearful hearts, the blind and the deaf and the lame—here are prophecies of healing for them all. How many-sided is God's cure! how rich His mercy!

I came back to the thought of the blossoming of the wilderness.

There is a wilderness of outward affliction. But God is still, as of old, the Healer of the sickly body and the burdened spirit. Either He takes the sorrow quite away, or He gives a special grace so that it is borne in His strength and it yields a peaceable and noble fruit. Ill that He blesses is my good. His thorns put on roses for me.

There is a wilderness of separation from those religious surroundings which help the soul. I may, in the providence of my Lord, or that I may advance Christ's kingdom, have to leave home and friends, and to sojourn where no Sabbath bells ring, and no Christian society is found. But He draws closer Himself and supplies all my need.

There is a wilderness of declension and apparent calamity to the Church. There are seasons in her history when she is not popular, but has to face opposition and dislike; other seasons, too, when she falls from her own high attainments. But so she learns to cling more simply to her heavenly King. And so she is taught penitence and trust.

There is a wilderness of death. But for him who knows God in Christ, even it blossoms as the meadow-saffron, the narcissus, the rose. Then the Father has His own secret to whisper to the child. Then He gives a supreme succour for a supreme need. And then, through fire and water, over crag and torrent, He leads the soul to the wealthy place.

ALEXANDER SMELLIE.

Transformation

*"Who sees God's hand in all things, and all things in
God's hand."*

I look to Thee in every need,
And never look in vain ;
I feel Thy touch, Eternal Love !
And all is well again :
The thought of Thee is mightier far
Than sin and pain and sorrow are.

Discouraged in the work of life,
Disheartened by its load,
Shamed by its failures or its fears,
I sink beside the road,—
But let me only think of Thee,
And then new heart springs up in me.

Thy calmness bends serene above,
My restlessness to fill,
Around me flows Thy quickening life,
To nerve my faltering will,
Thy presence fills my solitude ;
Thy providence turns all to good.

Embosomed deep in Thy dear love,
Held in Thy law, I stand ;
Thy hand in all things I behold,
And all things in Thy hand ;
Thou ledest me by unsought ways,
And turn'st my mourning into praise.

S. LONGFELLOW.

CHILDLIKE TRUST

Childlike Trust

As helpless as a child who clings
Fast to his father's arm,
And casts his weakness on the strength
That keeps him safe from harm :
So I, my Father, cling to Thee,
And thus I every hour
Would link my earthly feebleness
To Thine almighty power.

As trustful as a child who looks
Up in his mother's face,
And all his little griefs and fears
Forgets in her embrace :
So I to Thee, my Saviour, look,
And in Thy face divine
Can read the love that will sustain
As weak a faith as mine.

As loving as a child who sits
Close by his parent's knee,
And knows no want while it can have
That sweet society :
So, sitting at Thy feet, my heart
Would all its love outpour,
And pray that Thou would'st teach me, Lord,
To love Thee more and more.

J. D. BURNS.

WALKING WITH GOD

Thy home is with the humble, Lord !
The simple are Thy rest ;
Thy lodging is in childlike hearts ;
Thou makest there Thy nest.

F. W. FABER.

Submit yourself to God, and you shall find,
God fights the battles of a will resigned.

BISHOP KEN.

But God is never so far off
As even to be near ;
He is within : our spirit is
The home He holds most dear.

To think of Him as by our side
Is almost as untrue
As to remove His throne beyond
Those skies of starry blue.

So all the while I thought myself
Homeless, forlorn, and weary,
Missing my joy, I walked the earth
Myself God's sanctuary.

F. W. FABER.

“*Even the Forgiveness of Sins*”

SCRIPTURE READING: Psalm li.

Give penitence free way, for it cleanses while it burns. Rebuke the whisper that says, “Soul, take thine ease; eat, drink, and be merry.” Plunge down into the darkest corners—not only among sins of the tongue and the street, of society and business, of the house and the hand, of the market and the church, but among sins of forbidden desires, of subtle indulgence, of the temper and of the imagination—sins that ally themselves, if they can, with noble impulses and warm affections, with the intellect and with the honour.

This will be a worthy sacrifice, an acceptable Lenten service—such a fast as God hath chosen, and it will be a new wonder, if, at the end of that solemn scrutiny, we do not all implore, with no need of exhortation from each other, “God, be merciful to me, a sinner!”

In the Castle of Despair Christian found the Key of Promise in his bosom. And this is the promise: “*If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*”

“*Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son; in whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins.*”

F. D. HUNTINGTON.

"There is Forgiveness"

When in Thy light our sins we lay,
When from the depths the soul would pray,
Thou knowest what we dare not say—
There is forgiveness, Lord, with Thee.

When voices in the heart proclaim '
Our secret faults, our hidden shame,
Thy word of old is still the same—
There is forgiveness, Lord, with Thee.

When man is bitter, cold, and stern,
When to the Judge of all we turn,
The contrite heart Thou wilt not spurn,
There is forgiveness, Lord, with Thee.

When sin's sad harvest we must bear,
When we the cross of Christ must share,
Thy will be done—'tis all our prayer—
There is forgiveness, Lord, with Thee.

W. G. TARRANT.

The Prepared Heart

SCRIPTURE READING: Mark v. 40 to 43, and Acts vii. 54 to 60

Our anxious care, and our fretful eagerness for the lower rewards, repel the Christ. "When the crowd was put forth, He entered in."

There may surely be a preparation of the heart, an upper room where all the faculties with one accord unite in the prayer that is too intense for utterance.

Even in the street, the office, the factory, we may suddenly be conscious that the Lord has come to His Temple. Who knows what communing of man with his Maker may occur, where indeed it is most needed, in the busy city, in peril on the sea, amid the savage onset of murderous foes? Some have seen, like dying Stephen, the flying stones and the angry mob blotted out by heaven.

God is ever near us. His moveless face is as the sky above us. But His Spirit enters not until the soul is emptied of its hostile occupants, and cries out for the Giver rather than for His gifts.

FRANK JOHNSON.

The Offering

O God, what sacrifice can I
Bring to the glory of Thy throne ?
Thine is the earth and boundless sky ;
What have I which is not Thine own ?
 Nought but my will, myself, my whole,
 My body, spirit, and my soul !

These Thou hast deigned to ask of me,
And yet they are Thy gifts, and I
Am bound to render them to Thee—
Therefore in power and love be nigh,
 That I, with no reluctant brow,
 May bring them to Thy footstool now.

Put Thou my body to Thy school,
A living sacrifice to Thee ;
All the five gates of feeling rule,
In self-control my freedom be,
 Till every sense, and all desires
 Be purged by Thy refining fires.

Fill me with righteousness and truth,
With joy and peace, and gentle mood,
Courage and hope's immortal youth,
Long-suffering and fortitude,
 Meekness and temperance and awe,
 And most, with loving of Thy law.

And oh, where I am most alone,
Deep in my inner nature, be !
Clothe with perfection like Thine own
My spirit, let me put on Thee !
 Then lift me, Lord, to Heaven, and mov
 Through all the gardens of Thy love.
 STOFFORD A. BROOKE.

"The Spirit helpeth"

SCRIPTURE READING: Romans viii. 18 to 27

Fatal, in the spiritual world, in the success of all human endeavours, would be the withholding of the supernatural grace of the Spirit of God.

In vain as the sowing of seed on dry and barren soil, our reading and teaching, our sacraments and solemnities, if the secret place of germination aid not our efforts. In vain, as the spreading of sails beneath windless skies, every aspiration after holiness, every attempt to break away from sin and live for God, if the favouring breath of spiritual influence descend not to co-operate with our endeavours. Pray, then, for the Spirit.

In all your efforts to be good and to do good, seek this heavenly aid. Despair of success apart from it; rest not till you have obtained it.

The wind comes not at the sailor's, or the husbandman's, call; but in this, blessed be God, the earthly type (John iii. 8) is far transcended by the heavenly reality; for the believer is possessed of a spell that can summon the gracious aid of the Spirit in every time of need. . . . "Your heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him."

JOHN CAIRD.

Praying in the Holy Ghost

Lord, let me pray ; I know not how,
Nor what to pray for—Thou must show ;
The darkest, feeblest, need the most
The “praying in the Holy Ghost.”

What can man do, if left alone,
Beyond a faithless, useless moan ?
Helper of man’s infirmity,
O God the Spirit ! help Thou me.

Descend, O purity Divine,
And stoop to sins and wants like mine ;
Humble Thyself to all my need,
And in me, for me, with me plead.

Spirit of Holiness ! control,
Dilate, inspire, pervade my soul :
Make it a harp, from whose poor strings
Thy hand the suppliant music brings.

Make it a voice for heavenly thought,
Spirit of Power ! by Thee inwrought ;
Thou tender Spirit ! breathe in me
The tenderness of Deity.

Then God will hear ; He loves right well
The yearnings deep no words can tell ;
All interceding grace is there ;
Spirit of God ! pray Thou the prayer.

GEORGE RAWSON.

Walking in Love

SCRIPTURE READING: Romans viii. 1 to 10, and 35 to 39;
Colossians iii. 3 to 14

By the descent of the Spirit upon us we are caught up into a larger world, and, while our hands are busy with the things of time, our heart is hid with God. Herein is the true distinction between the carnal and the spiritual mind. The former moulds eternity by the vision and instruments of time; the latter fashions time by the eternal.

Our joy becomes God-sanctioned; peace is bestowed upon us. We can contentedly possess the portion assigned us by the Divine Father.

Thus centred in God, life becomes stable and joyous, and in its most secret hours the soul will turn Godward as the labouring man at evening turns to his home. Men will *walk with God*, and as a result their faces will shine the more serenely that they know it not.

It is in these large places, also, that Love comes to us. God is Love, and if we would abide in love we must abide in God. There is a pessimism that haunts the common ways of life. It does not believe that love can be applied to the problems of humanity. The real meaning of it is that few of us can love enough to prove the power of love. But the man who lives in face of eternity receives into his heart a tidal wave of love which carries the Divine impulses over the bar of his distrust.

FRANK JOHNSON.

Live in the Love of God

Live in the love of God
And let it live in thee,
This is the only rest,
The true felicity.

It is the central calm
Where tempests cannot rave,
Where flies no blinding foam,
Where leaps no raging wave.

It is the secret place
Where blessed souls abide,
Where evils stay their pace,
Or swiftly turn aside.

It is the oasis,
Where freshest fountains flow,
Where burning sands burn not,
Where palms abundant grow.

It is the air of heaven,
Where whoso draweth breath,
Breathes in the life Divine,
Breathes out the life of death.

Live in the love of God,
And let it live in Thee ;
This is the only rest,
The true felicity.

WALTER J. MATHAMS.

Personal Influence

SCRIPTURE READING: Matthew v. 13 to 16

It is personal influence that determines the size of a life; not words, or even deeds.

Let us pray and command; let us also live and shine. Precepts are necessary, but the incarnation of principle is indispensable. Are we not often at a loss to enjoin? Are we not often at fault how to behave?

God will find a medium for the influence, the utterance for the solicitude, the surface for the example. He has an interest in finding them—that is His concern. But the influence, and the solicitude, and the example—these are ours, and they are indispensable.

Next to the direct action of God's Spirit, the most available and potent force that operates on earth is the force of *Imitation*, and it is the most natural line along which the Holy Spirit will work. Nothing points to the pole of true and right but it draws other things that way.

R. W. BARBOUR.

"This Year also"

In this year of our good Lord, by His grace most kindly given,
Make some little patch of earth just a little more like heaven.

As the days come in and go, do some timely deeds of love,
In the fashion that is pleasing to the Perfect Heart above.

If you reach a spot all bare, where no bonny blossom grows,
Plant some heart's-ease, and some lilies, and set here and there
a rose.

If you meet, as meet you will, manly silent souls in pain,
Make them feel the absent angels are all coming back again.

In the time of rightful strife, fight your fight, since fight you
must,
Like a soldier ever equal, ever faithful to his trust.

If your comrades slacken pace, when the march fares stiff and
long,
Set their future steps to music; start a bracing bugle song.

These are simple things and small, but the small things turn to
great,
When our hearts with holy courage dare our Christ-appointed
fate.

So this year of our good Lord, by His grace most kindly given,
Will then leave us calmly singing on a little patch of heaven.

WALTER J. MATHAMS.

Perennial Youth

SCRIPTURE READING: 2 Corinthians iv. 8 to 18

The place and work of age are determined for the Christian by the remembrance that those in Christ have before them a life of endless growth in knowledge and power. "Though our outward man is decaying, yet our inward man is renewed day by day."

The materialist, for whom existence is but

"A moment's halt, a momentary taste
Of being from the well amid the waste,"

sees nothing when the rose of youth has faded but a span of misery, and then unconsciousness. For him, when the natural force abates, and the powers of adaptation, of assimilating new knowledge, and of tireless exertion are spent, the mine of individuality is worked out, and nothing remains but to hurry to the grave.

Not so does the Christian estimate the riches of being. A modern statesman better voices the instinct of the heart and the hope of faith.

"If," he says, "I were to follow the example of Lecky, and draw the Map of Life with such cartographical knowledge as has come to me, I should mark the age of seventy as the Cape of Good Hope, and, for the cheer of those who are doubling this Cape, I should show that it leads to a Pacific Sea, within whose bounds lie the Fortunate Isles."

FRANK JOHNSON.

Renewal

How sweet to me is life when shadows grey
Threaten a sunset to my spirit's sun !
I would not into memory sink away,
And weary dreams of work too sadly done.

Return in light ; faith to my faith impart,
Love to my love, and eyesight to my eyes,
Life to my life, and motion to my heart,
Nerve to my arms, and to these victories.

Restore my joys, let sweetly rippling peace
Be in the stead of dark, stagnating calm ;
In truth of Thy salvation, oh, release
My bonded spirit from engirding harm.

So act in me that I from Thee may act,
Free with a liberty Thou hast inspired ;
Then, like a broken city recompact,
My heart shall fortress be and home desired.

Oh, fill me with the energy that filled
Thine own dark days, Great Master, with success,
Sustaining Thee, as still Thy mercy willed
To share, and so subdue, the world's distress.

Then, then, with sweetening words for other's taste,
And ever-strengthening interior might,
I'll give the weary drink, and onward haste
Towards Thy dear mansion of unclouded light.

THOMAS T. LYNCH.

The Eternal Home

SCRIPTURE READING: 2 Corinthians v. 1 to 12

Is man immortal? I believe that he is, because I see him endowed with a mind, a conscience, a heart, which cannot find their perfect rest in this passing sphere and scene. I am more convinced that he is, because, when God enters into fellowship with him, the fellowship is too rich and many-coloured to be exhausted in the realm of the temporal and transient. But I am certain that he is, when I consider Christ, risen from the dead as the First-fruits of them that sleep, wearing man's name and nature on the throne of the world, coming again to receive him to Himself.

Let me try to realise, then, the blessedness of immortality.

It is my own coronation. I pass from the tent in which I groan, being burdened, to the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. It is the greatest day of my life. Through the dark and narrow gate of death, I go to what eye has not seen, and tongue cannot tell, and the heart can but dimly forecast.

It is reunion with children and friends. They are dead; and that dulls my brightest experience. But no! they are living; they are with God; they are "that City's shining spires I travel to." I shall see them again, and my heart will rejoice, and my joy no man will take from me.

Best of all, it is the sight of Christ. Here there is always a veil between Him and me. In my most gracious moments, the veil grows thin, diaphanous, transparent; yet it remains; it is not quite done away. But yonder there is no veil. The Lamb is all the glory in Immanuel's land. And *I am ambitious to be accepted of Him.*

ALEXANDER SMELLIE.

The Life Beyond

In the hour of death, after this life's whim,
When the heart beats low, and the eyes grow dim,
And pain has exhausted every limb—
The lover of the Lord shall trust in Him.

When the will has forgotten the life-long aim,
And the mind can only disgrace its fame,
And a man is uncertain of his own name,
The power of the Lord shall fill this frame.

When the last sigh is heaved and the last tear shed,
And the coffin is waiting beside the bed,
And the widow and child forsake the dead,
The angel of the Lord shall lift this head.

For even the purest delight may pall,
The power must fail, and the pride must fall,
And the love of the dearest friends grow small—
But the glory of the Lord is all in all.

R. D. BLACKMORE.

THE LONG LAST MILE

The Long Last Mile

Carry me over the long last mile,
Man of Nazareth, Christ for me !
Weary I wait by Death's dark stile,
In the wild and the waste, where the wind blows free,
And the shadows and sorrows come out of my past,
Look keen through my heart,
And will not depart,
Now that my poor world has come to its last !

Lord, is it long that my spirit must wait ?
Man of Nazareth, Christ for me !
Deep is the stream, and the night is late,
And grief blinds my soul that I cannot see,
Speak to me out of the silences, Lord,
That my spirit may know
As forward I go,
Thy pierc'd hands are lifting me over the ford !

L. MACLEAN WATT.
(From "*The Tryst*.")